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BERTRAM;

OR,

THE CASTLE OF ST. ALDOBRAND;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

THE REV. R. C. MATURIN.

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DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ST. ALDOBRAND	Mr. POPE.
BERTRAM	Mr. KEAN.
PRIOR of ST. ANSELM.....	Mr. HOLLAND.
1st MONK	Mr. POWELL.
2d MONK	Mr. R. PHILLIPS.
3d MONK.....	Mr. BARNARD.
1st ROBBER	Mr. KENT.
2d ROBBER	Mr. COOKE.
HUGO	Mr. CARR.
PIETRO	Mr. COVENEY.
PAGE	Miss CARR.
CHILD	Miss J. CARR.
IMOGINE	A YOUNG LADY.
CLOTILDA.....	Miss BOYCE.
TERESA.....	Miss. COOKE.

Knights, Monks, Soldiers, Banditti, &c. &c. &c.

PROLOGUE.

Written by J. Hobhouse, Esq.

SPOKEN BY MR. RAE.

TAUGHT by your judgment, by your favour led,
The Stage shall still restore her mighty dead.
But say, while wits of ages past revive,
Shall living genius therefore cease to thrive?
No! the same liberal zeal that fondly tries
To save the Poet, though the mortal dies,
Impartial welcomes each illustrious birth,
And proudly hails contemporary worth.

This night a Bard, who yet, alas! has known
Of conscious merit but the pangs alone;
Through dark misfortune's gloom condemned to cope
With baffled effort and with blighted hope,
Still dares to think one friendly voice shall cheer
His sinking soul and hopes to hail it here.
Fanned by your breath of praise, his spark of fame
Still, still may glow and brighten into flame.

Never did British candour mock the toil
That rear'd the laurel on Hibernia's soil;
That soil to Fancy's gay luxuriance kind,
That soil which teems with Genius' daring mind,
Rich in the fruits of glory's ripening sun—
Nurse of the brave—the land of WELLINGTON.

Here, too, this night—another candidate
Aspires to please, and trembles for her fate;—
And, as the flower whose ever-constant gaze
Turns to the sun and woos the genial blaze,

PROLOGUE.

To *your kind eyes* our blushing suppliant bends,
And courts the light that beams from partial friends;
To you she turns—'mid all her hopes and fears,
Stain not her cheek with more than mimic tears.

Since, then, alike here each adventurer sues
The vo'tary, and the handmaid of the Muse,
Think that the same neglect—the same regard,
Must sink, or save, the actress, and the bard.

BERTRAM;

OR,

The Castle of St. Aldobrand.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Night, a Gallery in a Convent, a large Gothic window in the extremity, through which lightning is seen flashing. Two Monks enter in terror.

1st Monk. Heaven for its mercy!—what a night is here!

Oh! didst thou hear that peal?

2d Monk. The dead must hear it.—(*A pause—thunder*). Speak! speak, and let me hear a human voice.

1st Monk. While the dark terror hurstled distantly
Lapt in the skirts of the advancing clouds,
I cower'd with head full low upon my pallet,

B

And deem'd that I might sleep—till the strong light
Did, clear as noon day, shew each object round me.
Relic, and rosary, and crucifix,
Did rock and quiver in the bickering glare—
Then forth I rushed in agony of fear.

2d Monk. Among the tombed tenants of the
cloister

I walked and told my beads,
But by the momentarily gleams of sheeted blue
Did the pale marbles glare so sternly on me
I almost deemed they lived, and fled in horror.

1st Monk. There is much comfort in a holy man
In such an hour as this. [*Knocking at a door.*]
Ho, wake thee, prior.

2d Monk. Oh! come forth, holy prior, and pray
for us.

Enter the Prior.

Prior. All peace be with you!—'tis a fearful hour.

1st Monk. Hath memory a parallel to this?

2d Monk. How hast thou fared in this most awful
time?

Prior. As one whom fear did not make pitiless,
I bowed me at the cross for those whose heads
Are naked to the visiting blasts of Heav'n
In this its hour of wrath—
For the lone traveller on the hill of storms,

For the tossed shipman on the perilous deep ;
Till the last peal that thundered o'er mine head
Did force a cry of—mercy for myself.

1st Monk. (Eagerly) Think'st thou these rock-
based turrets will abide?

2d Monk. Think'st thou they will not topple o'er
our heads?

Prior. The hand of him who rules the storm, is
o'er us.

1st Monk. Oh holy prior, this is no earthly storm.
The strife of fiends is on the battling clouds,
The glare of hell is in these sulphurous lightnings,—
This is no earthly storm.

Prior. Peace, peace—thou rash and unadvised
man ;

Oh ! add not to this night of nature's horrors
The darker shadowing of thy wicked fears.
The hand of Heaven, not man, is dealing with us,
And thoughts like thine do make it deal thus sternly.

Enter a Monk pale and breathless.

Prior. Speak, thou hast something seen.

3d Monk.———A fearful sight.

Prior. What hast thou seen ?

3d Monk. ———A piteous, fearful sight—
A noble vessel labouring with the storm

Hath struck upon the rocks beneath our walls,
And by the quivering gleams of livid blue
Her deck is crowded with despairing souls,
And in the hollow pauses of the storm
We heard their perishing cries—

Prior. Now haste ye forth,
Haste all—

3d Monk. It cannot be, it is too late;
For many a fathom doth the beetling rock
Rise o'er the breaker's surge that dashes o'er them,—
No help of human hand can reach them there—
One hour will hush their cries—and by the morn,
Thou wilt behold the ruin—wreck and corse
Float on the weltering wave.

Prior. Almighty power,
Can nought be done? All things are possible—
Wave high your torches on each crag and cliff—
Let many lights blaze on our battlements—
Shout to them in the pauses of the storm,
And tell them there is hope—
And let our deep-toned bell its loudest peal
Send cheerly o'er the deep—
'Twill be a comfort to the wretched souls
In their extremity—All things are possible;
Fresh hope may give them strength, and strength de-
liverance—
I'll hie me forth with you.

3d Monk. Wilt thou go forth—
Hardly the vigorous step of daring youth
May hold its footing on those wave-washed crags :
And how wilt thou abide ?

1st Monk. 'Tis tempting Heaven.—

Prior. To succour man, not tempt my God, I go ;
He will protect his servant.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

The Rocks—The Sea—A Storm—The Convent illuminated in the back ground—The Bell tolls at intervals—A groupe of Monks on the rocks with torches—A Vessel in distress in the Offing.

Enter the Prior and Monks below.

Prior. (*Clasping his hands*). Holy St. Anselm—
what a sight is here !

1st Monk. Pray for their souls—their earthly part
is doomed—

Prior. Oh ! that a prayer could hush the elements !—

Hold, I do espy a hope, a blessed hope—
That wave hath heaved her from the rock she struck on.
Lo, every arm on board is plied for safety—
Now, all the saints to speed.—

1st Monk. No saint doth hear.

Lo, the recoiling surge drives fiercely o'er her—

In, holy prior, or ere their drowning shriek

Do rive the sense ; in, in, and tell thy beads—

Prior. I will not in, while to that hopeless wreck
One arm doth cling ; while o'er the roaring waste
One voice be raised for help—I will not hence.

Monks above.

She sinks—she sinks—Oh hour of woe and horror !

*[The Vessel sinks—The Prior falls into the arms of
the Monks. The Scene shuts.]*

SCENE III.

The Gallery.

Enter the first Monk and the Prior.

1st Monk. Now rest you, holy prior, you are much
moved—

Prior. (*not heeding him*)—All, all did perish—

1st Monk. Change those drenched weeds—

Prior. I wist not of them—every soul did perish—

Enter 3d Monk hastily.

3d Monk. No, there was one did battle with the
storm

With careless, desperate force ; full many times

His life was won and lost, as though he recked not—
No hand did aid him, and he aided none—
Alone he breasted the broad wave, alone
That man was saved——

Prior. Where is he? lead him hither.

[The stranger is led in by Monks.]

Prior. Raise to St. Anselm, thou redeemed soul,
Raise high thy living voice in prayer and praise;
For wonderous hath his mercy been to thee—

2d Monk. He hath not spoken yet—

Stranger. Who are those round me?
Where am I?

Prior. On the shore of Sicily—
The convent of St. Anselm this is called—
Near is the castle of Lord Aldobrand—
A name far known, if, as thy speech imports,
Thou'rt of Italian birth—

(At the name of Aldobrand, the Stranger makes an effort to break from the Monks, but falls through weakness.)

Prior. Tell us thy name, sad man—

Stranger. A man of woe—

Prior. What is thy woe, that Christian love may
heal it—

Hast thou upon the pitiless waters lost
Brother, or sire, or son? did she thou lovest
Sink in thy straining sight!—

Or have the hoardings of thy worldly thrift
Been lost with yonder wreck?—

[To these questions the Stranger gives signs of dissent.]

Prior. Why dost thou then despond?

Stranger. Because I live—

Prior. Look not so wild—can we do aught for
thee?

Stranger. Yes, plunge me in the waves from which
ye snatched me ;

So will the sin be on your souls, not mine—

Prior. I'll question not with him—his brain is
wrecked—

For ever in the pauses of his speech

His lip doth work with inward mutterings,

And his fixed eye is rivetted fearfully

On something that no other sight can spy.

Food and rest will restore him—lead him in—

Stranger. (*dashing off the monks as they approach*)

Off—ye are men—there's poison in your touch,—

[Sinking back.]

But I must yield, for this hath left me strengthless.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV.

A Hall in the Castle of Aldobrand.

Enter Pietro and Teresa meeting.

Piet. Hah! Teresa waking! Was ever such a tempest?

Teres. The Lady Imogine would watch all night. And I have tended on her. What roused thee?

Piet. Would you could tell me what would give me sleep in such a night. I know of but one remedy for fear and wakefulness; that is a flaggon of wine. I hoped the thunder would have waked old Hugo to open the cellar-door for me.

Teres. He hath left his bed. E'en now I passed him

Measuring the banquet-hall with restless steps
And moody fretful gestures. He approaches.

Enter Hugo.

Piet. Hugo, well met. Does e'en thy age bear memory of so terrible a storm?

Hug. They have been frequent lately.

Piet. They are ever so in Sicily.

Hug. So it is said. But storms when I was young
Would still pass o'er like Nature's fitful fevers

And render'd all more wholesome. Now their rage
Sent thus unseasonable and profitless
Speaks like the threats of Heaven.

Teres. Heaven grant its wrath visit not my kind
Lady!

Hug. Heaven grant, Teresa.
She may be still as happy in these halls,
As when she tripp'd the green a rural maid
And caroll'd light of heart—ere her good father's ruin;
Or our Lord saw and loved her!

Piet. See, if Madam Clotilda be not roused.

Teres. I'm glad, for she's our lady's loved com-
panion
And most esteemed attendant.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. Is the Lady Imogene risen?

Teres. She hath not rested through the night.
Long ere the storm arose, her restless gestures
Forbade all hope to see her bless'd with sleep.

Clot. Since her lord's absence it is ever thus.
But soon he will return to his loved home,
And the gay knights and noble wassailers
Banish her lonely melancholy.

(*Horn heard without.*)

Monk. (*without*). What, ho.

Hug. There's some one at the gate.
My fears presage unwelcome messengers
At such untimely hours.

Clot. Attend the summons, Hugo.
I seek the Lady Imogine. If 'tis aught
Concerns her or our Lord, follow me thither.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

*A Gothic Apartment. Imogine discovered sitting at
a Table, looking at a Picture.*

Imo. Yes,
The limner's art may trace the absent feature,
And give the eye of distant weeping faith
To view the form of its idolatry;
But oh! the scenes 'mid which they met and parted—
The thoughts, the recollections sweet and bitter—
Th' Elysian dreams of lovers, when they loved—
Who shall restore them?
Less lovely are the fugitive clouds of eve,
And not more vanishing—if thou couldst speak,
Dumb witness of the secret soul of Imogine,
Thou might'st acquit the faith of womankind—

Since thou wast on my midnight pillow laid
Friend hath forsaken friend—the brotherly tie
Been lightly loosed—the parted coldly met—
Yea, mothers have with desperate hands wrought
 harm
To little lives from their own bosoms lent.
But woman still hath loved—if that indeed
Woman e'er loved like me.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. The storm seems hushed—wilt thou to rest,
 Lady?

Imo. I feel no lack of rest—

Clot. Then let us stay—

And watch the last peal murmuring on the blast.
I will sit by the while, so thou wilt tell
Some pleasant story to beguile the time.

Imo. I am not in the mood.

Clot. I pray thee, tell me of some shadowy thing
Crossing the traveller on his path of fear
On such a night as this—
Or shipwrecked seamen clinging to a crag
From which some hand of darkness pushes him.

Imo. Thou simple maid—
Thus to enslave thy heart to foolish fears.

Clot. Far less I deem of peril is in such

Than in those tales women most love to list to,
The tales of love—for they are all untrue.

Imo. Lightly thou say'st that woman's love is false,
The thought is falser far—

For some of them are true as martyr's legends,
As full of suffering faith, of burning love,
Of high devotion—worthier heaven than earth—
Oh, I do know a tale.

Clot.

Of knight or lady?

Imo. Of one who loved—She was of humble birth
Yet dared to love a proud and noble youth.
His sovereign's smile was on him—glory blazed
Around his path—yet did he smile on her—
Oh then, what visions were that blessed one's!
His sovereign's frown came next—
Then bowed the banners on his crested walls
Torn by the enemies' hand from their proud height,
Where twice two hundred years they mocked the
storm.

The stranger's step profaned his desolate halls,
An exiled outcast, houseless, nameless, abject,
He fled for life, and scarce by flight did save it.
No hoary headsman bid his parting step
God speed—No faithful vassal followed him;
For fear had withered every heart but hers,
Who amid shame and ruin lov'd him better.

Clot. Did she partake his lot?

Imo. She burned to do it,
But 'twas forbidden.

Clot. How proved she then her love?

Imo. Was it not love to pine her youth away?
In her lone bower she sat all day to hearken
For tales of him, and—soon came tales of woe.
High glory lost he recked not what was saved—
With desperate men in desperate ways he dealt—
A change came o'er his nature and his heart
Till she that bore him had recoiled from him,
Nor know the alien visage of her child.
Yet still she loved, yea, still loved hopeless on.

Clot. Hapless lady! What hath befallen her?

Imo. Full many a miserable year hath past—
She knows him as one dead, or worse than dead;
And many a change her varied life hath known,
But her heart none.

In the lone hour of tempest and of terror
Her soul was on the dark hill's side with Bertram,
Yea, when the launched bolt did sear her sense
Her soul's deep orisons were breathed for him.
Was this not love? yea, thus doth woman love.

Clot. I would I had beheld their happier hours,
Hast thou e'er seen the dame? I pray thee, paint her.

Imo. They said her cheek of youth was beautiful
Till withering sorrow blanched the bright rose there—
And I have heard men swear her form was fair;

But grief did lay his icy finger on it,
And chilled it to a cold and joyless statue.
Methought she carolled blithely in her youth,
As the couched nestling trills his vesper lay,
But song and smile, beauty and melody,
And youth and happiness are gone from her.
Perchance—even as she is—he would not scorn her
If he could know her—for, for him she's changed;
She is much altered—but her heart—her heart.

Clot. I would I might behold that wretched lady,
In all her sad and waning loveliness.

Imo. Thou would'st not deem her wretched—out-
ward eyes

Would hail her happy.

They've decked her form in purple and in pall.
When she goes forth, the thronging vassals kneel,
And bending pages bear her footcloth well—
No eye beholds that lady in her bower,
That is her hour of joy, for then she weeps,
Nor does her husband hear.

Clot. Sayst thou her husband?—
How could she wed, she who did love so well?

Imo. How could she wed! What could I do but
wed—

Hast seen the sinking fortunes of thy house—
Hast felt the gripe of bitter shameful want—
Hast seen a father on the cold cold earth,

Hast read his eye of silent agony,
That asked relief, but would not look reproach
Upon his child unkind—
I would have wed disease, deformity,
Yea, griped Death's grisly form to 'scape from it—
And yet some sorcery was wrought on me,
For earlier things do seem as yesterday,
But, I've no recollection of the hour
They gave my hand to Aldobrand.

Clot. Blessed saints—

And was it thou indeed ?

Imo. I am that wretch—

The wife of a most noble, honoured lord—
The mother of a babe whose smiles do stab me—
But *thou* art Bertram's still, and Bertram's ever!

(Striking her heart.)

Clot. Hath time no power upon thy hopeless love ?

Imo. Yea, time hath power, and what a power I'll
tell thee,

A power to change the pulses of the heart
To one dull throb of ceaseless agony,
To hush the sigh on the resigned lip
And lock it in the heart—freeze the hot tear
And bid it on the eyelid hang for ever—
Such power hath time o'er me.

Clot. And has not then

A husband's kindness—

Imo. Mark me, Clotilda.

And mark me well, I am no desperate wretch
Who borrows an excuse from shameful passion
To make its shame more vile—
I am a wretched, but a spotless wife,
I've been a daughter but too dutiful—
But, oh! the writhings of a generous soul
Stabb'd by a confidence it can't return,
To whom a kind word is a blow on th' heart—
I cannot paint thy wretchedness. (*bursts into tears*).

Clot.

Nay, nay

Dry up your tears, soon will your lord return,
Let him not see you thus by passion shaken.

Imo. Oh wretched is the dame, to whom the sound
“Your lord will soon return”—no pleasure brings.

Clot. Some step approaches—'tis St. Anselm's
Monk.

Imo. Remember—now, what wouldst thou reverend
father?

Enter first Monk.

Monk. St. Anselm's benison on you, gracious dame,
Our holy prior by me commends him to you—
The wreck that struck upon our rocks i' th' storm
Hath thrown some wretched souls upon his care.
(For many have been saved since morning dawned)
Wherefore he prays the wonted hospitality
That the free noble usage of your castle

Doth grant to ship-wreck'd and distressed men—

Imo. Bear back my greetings to your holy prior—
Tell him the lady of St. Aldobrand
Holds it no sin, although her lord be absent,
To ope her gates to wave-tossed mariners—
Now Heaven forefend your narrow cells were cumbered
While these free halls stood empty—tell your prior
We hold the custom of our castle still.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Convent, the Stranger lies sleeping on a Couch. The Prior watching him.

Prior. He sleeps, if it be sleep ; this starting trance
Whose feverish tossings and deep muttered groans,
Do prove the soul shares not the body's rest—

[hanging over him.

How the lip works, how the bare teeth do grind—
And beaded drops course down his writhen brow—
I will awake him from this horrid trance,
This is no natural sleep—ho, wake thee, stranger—

Stran. What, wouldst thou have, my life is in thy
power—

Prior. Most wretched man, whose fears alone betray thee—

What art thou,—speak.

Stran. —————Thou sayest I am a wretch—
And thou sayest true—these weeds do witness it—
These wave-worn weeds—these bare and bruised limbs,
What wouldst thou more—I shrink not from the
question.

I am a wretch, and proud of wretchedness,
'Tis the sole earthly thing that cleaves to me.

Prior. Lightly I deem of outward wretchedness,
For that hath been the lot of blessed saints—
But in their dire extreme of outward wretchedness
Full calm they slept in dungeons and in darkness—
Such hath not been thy sleep—

Stran. Didst watch my sleep—
But thou couldst glean no secret from my ravings.—

Prior. Thy secrets, wretched man, I reck not of
them—

But I adjure thee by the church's power
(A power to search man's secret heart of sin),
Shew me thy wound of soul—
Weep'st thou, the ties of nature or of passion
Torn by the hand of Heaven—
Oh no! full well I deemed no gentler feeling
Woke the dark lightning of thy withering eye—
What fiercer spirit is it tears thee thus?
Shew me the horrid tenant of thy heart—
Or wrath, or hatred, or revenge, is there—

Stran. (*suddenly starting from his Couch, falling
on his knees; and raising his clasped hands.*)

I would consort with mine eternal enemy,
To be revenged on him.—

Prior. Art thou a man, or fiend, who speakest thus.

Stran. I was a man, I know not what I am—

What others' crimes and injuries have made me—
Look on me—What am I?— [advancing.

Prior. —————I know thee not.

Stran. I marvel that thou say'st it—
For lowly men full oft remember those
In changed estate, whom equals have forgotten:
A passing beggar hath remembered me,
When with strange eyes my kinsmen looked on me—
I wore no sullied weeds on that proud day
When thou a barefoot monk didst bow full low
For alms, my heedless hand hath flung to thee—
Thou doest not know me.— [approaching him.

Prior. Mine eyes are dim with age—but many
thoughts

Do stir within me at thy voice.

Stran. List to me, monk, it is thy trade to talk,
As reverend men do use in saintly wise,
Of life's vicissitudes and vanities—
Hear one plain tale that doth surpass all saws—
Hear it from me—*Count Bertram*—aye—*Count*
Bertram—

The darling of his liege and of his land
The army's idol, and the council's head—
Whose smile was fortune, and whose will was law—
Doth bow him to the prior of St. Anselm
For water to refresh his parched lip,
And this hard-matted couch to fling his limbs on.—

Prior. Good Heaven and all its saints!—

Ber. Wilt thou betray me?—

Prior. Lives there the wretch beneath these walls
to do it?

Sorrow enough hath bowed thy head already
Thou man of many woes.—

Far more I fear least thou betray thyself.
Hard by do stand the halls of Aldobrand
(Thy mortal enemy and cause of fall),
Where ancient custom doth invite each stranger
Cast on this shore to sojourn certain days,
And taste the bounty of the castle's lord—
If thou goest not, suspicion will arise
And if thou dost (all changed as thou art),
Some desperate burst of passion will betray thee
And end in mortal scathe—

What dost thou gaze on with such fixed eyes?

Ber.———What sayest thou?

I dreamed I stood before Lord Aldobrand
Impenetrable to his searching eyes—
And I did feel the horrid joy men feel
Measuring the serpent's coil whose fangs have stung
them;

Scanning with giddy eye the air-hung rock
From which they leapt and live by miracle;
Following the dun skirt of the o'erpast storm
Whose bolt did leave them prostrate—

—To see that horrid spectre of my thoughts
In all the stern reality of life—
To mark the living lineaments of hatred,
And say, this is the man whose sight should blast me ;
Yet in calm dreadful triumph still gaze on :—
It is a horrid joy.

Prior.————Nay, rave not thus—
Thou wilt not meet him, many a day must pass
Till from Palermo's walls he wend him homeward—
Where now he tarries with St. Anselm's knights.—
His dame doth dwell in solitary wise
Few are the followers in his lonely halls—
Why dost thou smile in that most horrid guise ?—

Ber. (*repeating his words.*)
His dame doth dwell alone—perchance his child—
Oh, no, no, no—it was a damned thought.

Prior. I do but indistinctly hear thy words,
But feel they have some fearful meaning in them.—

Ber. Oh, that I could but mate him in his might,
Oh, that we were on the dark wave together,
With but one plank between us and destruction,
That I might grasp him in these desperate arms,
And plunge with him amid the weltering billows—
And view him gasp for life—and—

Prior. Horrible—horrible—I charge thee cease—
The shrines are trembling on these sainted walls—
The stony forms will start to life and answer thee

Ber. Ha ha—I see him struggling—
I see him—ha, ha, ha (*a frantic laugh.*)

Prior.———Oh horrible—
Help, help—to hold him—for my strength doth fail—

Enter 1st Monk.

Monk. The lady of St. Aldrobrand sends greeting—

Prior. Oh, art thou come, this is no time for
greeting—
Help—bear him off—thou sees't his fearful state.
[*Exeunt bearing him off.*]

SCENE II.

Hall in the Castle of St. Aldobrand.

*Enter Hugo shewing in Bertram's Comrades,
Clotilda following.*

Hugo. This way, friends, this way, good cheer
awaits you.

1st Sail. Well then, good cheer was never yet
bestowed

On those who need it more.

Hugo. ———To what port bound,
Did this fell storm o'ertake you?

1st Sail ———No matter
So we find here a comfortable haven.

Hug. Whence came you?

1st Sail.———Psha, I cannot answer fasting.

Hugo. Roughness, the proverb says, speaks honesty,
I hope the adage true.

Clot. Lead them in, Hugo,
They need speedy care—which is your leader?

1st Sail. He will be here anon—what ye would
know,
Demand of him.

2d Sail. (*advancing*) He's here.

Clot. I fain would learn
Their country and their fortunes.

*Enter Bertram, with a sullen air, but scrutinizing
all around.*

Clot. Is that him?
His looks appal me, I dare not speak to him,
[*All pause at his appearance.*

Hugo. Come, come, the feast's prepared within,
this way.

[*Bertram passes on sullenly and exit.*

Clot. The grief that clothes that leader's woe-
worn form,
The chilling awe his ruin'd grandeur wears
Is of no common sort—I must observe him.

[*Exit Clot.*

1st Sail. Now, comrades, we will honour our host's
bounty

With jovial hearts, and gay forgetfulness
Of perils past and coming.

Glee.

We be men escaped from dangers,
Sweet to think of o'er our bowls;—
Wilds have ne'er known hardier rangers,
Hall shall ne'er see blither souls.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*Moonlight; a terraced rampart of the Castle; a part
of the latter is seen, the rest concealed by woods.*

*Imogene alone, she gazes at the Moon for some time,
and then advances slowly.*

Imo. ——— Mine own loved light,
That every soft and solemn spirit worships,
That lovers love so well—strange joy is thine,
Whose influence o'er all tides of soul hath power,
Who lendst thy light to rapture and despair;—
The glow of hope and wan hue of sick fancy
Alike reflect thy rays : alike thou lightest
The path of meeting or of parting love—
Alike on mingling or on breaking hearts
Thou smil'st in throned beauty.—Bertram—Bertram,

How sweet it is to tell the listening night
The name beloved—it is a spell of power
To wake the buried slumberers of the heart,
Where memory lingers o'er the grave of passion
Watching its tranced sleep!—
The thoughts of other days are rushing on me,
The loved, the lost, the distant, and the dead,
Are with me now, and I will mingle with them
'Till my sense fails, and my raised heart is wrapt
In secret suspension of mortality.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. Why dost thou wander by this mournful light,
Feeding sick fancy with the thought that poisons?—

Imo. I will but weep beneath the moon awhile.—
Now do not chide my heart for this sad respite,
The thoughts it most doth love do visit it then,
And make it feel like heaven—

Clot. Nay, come with me, and view those storm-
'scaped men
A feasting in thy hall; 'twill cheer thy heart—
Of perils 'scaped by flood and fire they tell,
And many an antique legend wild they know
And many a lay they sing—hark, their deep voices
Come faintly on the wind.

(Noise of singing and revelry without.)

Imo. Their wild and vulgar mirth doth startle me.
This clamorous wassail in a baron's hall
Ill suits the state of rescued fearful men :—
But as I passed the latticed gallery
One stood alone ;—I marked him where he stood,
His face was veiled,—faintly a light fell on him ;
But through soiled weeds his muffled form did shew
A wild and terrible grandeur.

Clot. I marked him too. He mixed not with the
rest,

But o'er his wild mates held a stern controul—
Their rudest burst of riotous merriment
Beneath his dark eye's stilling energy
Was hushed to silence.

Imo. He never spoke ?

Clot. No, he did nought but sigh,
If I might judge by the high-heaving vesture
Folded so deep on his majestic breast ;—
Of sound I heard not—

Imo. Call him hither.—

There is a mystery of woe about him
That strongly stirs the fancy.

Clot. Wilt thou confer alone, at night, with one
Who bears such fearful form ?

Imo. Why therefore send him—
All things of fear have lost their power o'er me—

[*Exit Clotilda.*]

Imogene appears to be debating with herself how to receive him, at length she says

Imo. If he do bear, like me, a withered heart
I will not mock him with a sound of comfort—

Bertram enters slowly from the end of the stage, his arms folded, his eyes fixed on the earth, she does not know him.

Imo. A form like that hath broken on my dreams
So darkly wild, so proudly stern,
Doth it rise on me waking?

Bertram comes to the end of the stage, and stands without looking at her.

Imo. Stranger, I sent for thee, for that I deemed
Some wound was thine, that yon free band might
chafe,—

Perchance thy wordly wealth sunk with yon wreck—
Such wound my gold can heal—the castle's almoner—

Ber. The wealth of worlds were heaped on me in vain.

Imo. Oh then I read thy loss—Thy heart is sunk
In the dark waters pitiless; some dear friend,
Or brother, loved as thine own soul, lies there—
I pity thee, sad man, but can no more—
Gold I can give, but can no comfort give
For I am comfortless—

Yet if I could collect my faltering breath
Well were I meet for such sad ministry,
For grief hath left my voice no other sound—

Ber. (Striking his heart.)

No dews give freshness to this blasted soil.—

Imo. Strange is thy form, but more thy words are
— strange—

Fearful it seems to hold this parley with thee.

Tell me thy race and country—

Ber. What avails it?

The wretched have no country: that dear name.

Comprizes home, kind kindred, fostering friends,

Protecting laws, all that binds man to man—

But none of these are mine;—I have no country—

And for my race, the last dread trump shall wake

The sheeted relics of mine ancestry,

Ere trump of herald to the armed lists

In the bright blazon of their stainless coat,

Calls their lost child again.—

Imo. I shake to hear him—

There is an awful thrilling in his voice,—

The soul of other days comes rushing in them.—

If nor my bounty nor my tears can aid thee,

Stranger, farewell; and 'mid thy misery

Pray, when thou tell'st thy beads, for one more wretched.

Ber. Stay, gentle lady, I would somewhat with
thee.

Imogene retreats terrified.

(Detaining her)—Thou shalt not go—

Imo. Shall not!—Who art thou? speak—

Ber. And must I speak?—

There was a voice which all the world, but thee
Might have forgot, and been forgiven,—

Imo. My senses blaze—between the dead and living
I stand in fear—oh God!—It cannot be—
Those thick black locks—those wild and sun-burnt
features

He looked not thus—but then that voice—
It cannot be—for he would know my name.

Ber. Imogine—[*She has tottered towards him during the last speech, and when he utters her name, shrieks and falls into his arms.*]

Ber. Imogine—yes,

Thus pale, cold, dying, thus thou art most fit
To be enfolded to this desolate heart—
A blighted lily on its icy bed—

Nay, look not up, 'tis thus I would behold thee.
That pale cheek looks like truth—I'll gaze no more—
That fair, that pale, dear cheek, these helpless arms,
If I look longer they will make me human.

Imo. (*starting from him.*)

Fly, fly, the vassals of thine enemy wait
To do thee dead.

Ber. Then let them wield the thunder,
Fell is their dint, who're mailed in despair.
Let mortal might sever the grasp of Bertram.

Imo. Release me—I must break from him—he knows not—

Oh God!

Ber. Imagine—madness seizes me—
Why do I find thee in mine enemy's walls?
What dost thou do in halls of Aldobrand?
Infernal light doth shoot athwart my mind—
Swear thou art a dependent on his bounty,
That chance, or force, or sorcery, brought thee hither;
Thou canst not be—my throat is swoln with agony—
Hell hath no plague—Oh no, thou couldst not do it.

Imo. (*kneeling.*) Mercy.

Ber. Thou hast it not, or thou wouldst speak—
Speak, speak, (*with frantic violence.*)

Imo. I am the wife of Aldobrand,
To save a famishing father did I wed.

Ber. I will not curse *her*—but the hoarded vengeance—

Imo. Aye—curse, and consummate the horrid spell,
For broken-hearted, in despairing hour
With every omen dark and dire I wedded—
Some ministering demon mocked the robed priest,
With some dark spell, not holy vow they bound me,
Full were the rites of horror and despair.
They wanted but—the seal of Bertram's curse.

Ber. (*not heeding her.*)
—Talk of her father—could a father love thee

As I have loved?—the veriest wretch on earth
 Doth cherish in some corner of his heart,
 Some thought that makes that heart a sanctuary
 For pilgrim dreams in midnight-hour to visit,
 And weep and worship there.

—And such thou wert to me—and thou art lost.
 —What was her father? could a father's love
 Compare with mine?—in want, and war, and peril,
 Things that would thrill the hearer's blood to tell of,
 My heart grew human when I thought of thee—
 Imogine would have shuddered for my danger—
 Imogine would have bound my leechless wounds—
 Imogine would have sought my nameless corse,
 And known it well—and she was wedded—wedded—
 —Was there no name in hell's dark catalogue
 To brand thee with, but mine immortal foe's?—
 And did I 'scape from war, and want, and famine
 To perish by the falsehood of a woman?

Imo. Oh spare me,—Bertram—oh preserve thyself—

Ber. A despot's vengeance, a false country's curses,
 The spurn of menials whom this hand had fed—
 In my heart's steeled pride I shook them off,
 As the bayed lion from his hurtless hide
 Shakes his pursuers' darts—across their path—
 One dart alone took aim, thy hand did barb it.

Imo. He did not hear my father's cry—Oh heaven—

Nor food, nor fire, nor raiment, and his child
Knelt madly to the hungry walls for succour
E'er her wrought brain could bear the horrid thought
Or wed with him—or—see thy father perish.

Ber. Thou tremblest least I curse thee, tremble
not—

Though thou hast made me, woman, very wretched—
Though thou hast made me—but I will not curse
thee—

Hear the last prayer of Bertram's broken heart,
That heart which thou hast broken, not his foes. !—
Of thy rank wishes the full scope be on thee—
May pomp and pride shout in thine adder'd path
Till thou shalt feel and sicken at their hollowness—
May he thou'st wed, be kind and generous to thee
Till thy wrung heart, stabb'd by his noble fondness
Writhe in detesting consciousness of falsehood—
May thy babe's smile speak daggers to that mother
Who cannot love the father of her child,
And in the bright blaze of the festal hall,
When vassals kneel, and kindred smile around thee,
May ruined Bertram's pledge hiss in thine ear—
Joy to the proud dame of St. Aldobrand—
While his cold corse doth bleach beneath her towers.

Imo. (*Detaining him*) Stay.

Ber. No.

Imo. Thou hast a dagger.

Ber. Not for woman.—

Imo. (*flinging herself on the ground*)

It was my prayer to die in Bertram's presence,
But not by words like these—

Ber. (*turning back*)—on the cold earth!
—I do forgive thee from my inmost soul—

(*The child of Imogene rushes in and clings to her*)

Child. Mother,

Ber. (*eagerly snatching up the child*)

God bless thee, child—Bertram hath kissed thy child.

(*He rushes out, Clotilda enters gazing after him
in terror, and goes to afford relief to Imogene.*)

The curtain drops.

ACT III.



SCENE I.

A Wood;—the Stage darkened;—St. Aldobrand speaking to a page behind the Scenes.

Ald. Hold thou my good steed, page; the moon is
down,
We've far outstript the knights, but slacker speed
Hath found a surer road—where, think'st thou, are we?

Enter St. Aldobrand and a Page.

Vainly I listen through the night so still
For bell that tells of holy convent near,
Or warder's bugle from the battlement,
Or horn of knight returning from the chase—
All is dark, still, and lorn, wheré deemest thou are we?

Page. Oh we are nigh a fell and fearful spot,
For by the last gleams of the sunken moon
I saw the towers—

Ald. What towers are those, boy?

Page. The ruined towers that 'tis said are haunted—
Dimly they rose amid the doubtful gloom,
But not one star-beam twinkled on their summits.

Ald. Then, not four leagues divide me from mine
home.—

Mine home—it is a pleasant sound—there bide
My dame and child—all pleasant thoughts dwell
there—

Then, while I rest beneath this broad-armed tree,
Or oak, or elm, in this dark night I wot not—
It shall be thy sweet penance to rehearse
All thou hast heard of these most fearful towers—
The tale will sooth my sleep, nor mar my dreams—

Page. Then let me couch by thee—I pray thee do—
For ever I love 'mid frightful tales i' th' dark
To touch the hand I tell the tale of fear to—

[*A bell tolls.*

Ald. Hark! 'tis the convent bell, forego thy tale—
The blessed thoughts of home are in that sound
That near my castle's gallant walls doth float—

[*Chorus of knights heard faintly
from the forest.*

Ald. What voices swell upon the midnight air?

Page. St. Anselm's knights.

Ald. Yes, 'tis their pious wont,
When journeying near the sound of convent-bell
'Mid flood or fire, to raise the holy hymn

That chaunts the praise of their protecting saint—
List to the solemn harmony—
Guided by that we may rejoin their company.

[*Exeunt.*]

*Chorus heard again, and continues drawing nearer
till the scene changes.*

SCENE II.

The Convent.

The Prior reading ; Bertram views him with the attention of one who envies him, then speaks.

Ber. How many hours have passed since matin-bell?

Prior. I know not, till it sound again to vespers.

Time passes o'er us with a noiseless lapse :

Our hours are marked alone by prayer and study,

And know no change but by their mute succession—

Ber. Yea—thus they live, if this may life be
called

Where moving shadows mock the parts of men.

Prayer follows study, study yields to prayer—

Bell echoes bell, till wearied with the summons

The ear doth ache for that last welcome peal

That tolls an end to listless vacancy—

Aye—when the red swol'n stream comes roaring
down—

Full many a glorious flower, and stately tree,
Floats on the ruthless tide, whose unfelt sway
Moves not the mire that stagnates at the bottom.
The storm for Bertram—and it hath been with me,
Dealt with me branch and bole, bared me to th' roots,
And where the next wave bears my perished trunk
In its dread lapse, I neither know, nor reck of—

Prior.—Thou desperate man, whom mercy
woos in vain,

Although with miracles she pleads—
Forbear, I say, to taint these holy echoes
With the fell sounds of thy profane despair.—

Ber. Good monk, I am beholden to your patience.
Take this from one, whose lips do mock at praise ;—
Thou art a man, whose mild and reverend functions
Might change the black creed of misanthropy,
And bid my better angel half return.—
But—'tis impossible—I will not trouble thee—
The wayward Bertram and his moody mates
Are tenants all unmeet for cloistered walls—
We will find fitter home.

Prior. Whither wilt thou resort ?

Ber. Is there no forest
Whose shades are dark enough to shelter us,
Or cavern rifted by the perilous lightning,

Where we must grapple with the tenanting wolf
To earn our bloody lair—there let us bide,
Nor hear the voice of man, nor call of heaven.—

Pri. Wend not I charge thee, with those desperate
men.

Full well I wot who are thy fearful mates—
In their stern strife with the incensed deep
That dashed them bruised and breathless on our
shores,

When their drenched hold forsook both gold and geer,
They griped their daggers with a murderer's instinct.
—I read thee for the leader of a band
Whose trade is blood.—

Ber. Well then, thou knowest the worst—
And let the worst be known, I am their leader—

Pri. Mark what I reed, renounce that horrid
league—

Flee to the castle of St. Aldobrand,
His power may give thee safety, and his dame
May plead for thee against the law's stern purpose—
All as thou art unknown—

Ber. His dame plead for me!—
When my cold corse torn from some felon wheel,
Or dug from lightless depth of stony dungeon
Welters in the cold gaze of pitiless strangers;
Then fling it at his gate, whose cursed stones
My living foot treads never,—yet beware

Lest the corse burst its cearments stark, and curse thee—

Pri. Hush, hush these horrid sounds; where wilt thou bide?

Near us nor knight nor baron holds his keep,
For far and wide thy foeman's land extends.

Ber. The world hath ample realms beyond his power.

There must I dwell—I seek my rugged mates—
The frozen mountain, or the burning sand
Would be more wholesome than the fertile realm
That's lorded o'er by Aldobrand.

[*Exit Bertram.*]

Pri. High-hearted man, sublime even in thy guilt;
Whose passions are thy crimes, whose angel-sin
Is pride that rivals the star-bright apostate's.—
Wild admiration thrills me to behold
An evil strength, so above earthly pitch—
Descending angels only could reclaim thee—

Enter 2d Monk.

Monk. The lady of St. Aldobrand in haste
Craves swift admittance to your sacred cell.

Pri. She is a gracious, and a pious dame,
And doth our cell much honour by her presence.

Enter Imogene. She kneels to him.

Pri. The blessings of these sainted walls be on thee.
Why art thou thus disturbed, what moves thee,
daughter?

Imo. Nay, do not raise me with those reverend
hands,

Nor benison of saint greet mine approach,
Nor shadow of holy hand stretched forth to bless me.—
I am a wretched, soul-struck, guilty woman.

Pri. Thou dost amaze me; by mine holy order
I deemed no legends of our cloistered saints
Held holier records of pure sanctity
Than the clear answer of thy stainless life
To shrift's most piercing search—

Imo. Oh holy prior, no matron proud and pure,
Whose dreams ne'er wandered from her wedded lord,
Whose spoused heart was plighted with her hand,
Kneels for thy prayer of power—I am a wretch,
Who, pale and withering with unholy love,
Lay a shrunk corse in duty's fostering arms,
And with cold smiles belied her heart's despair.
I've nursed a slumbering serpent till it stung me,
And from my heart's true guardian, hid its foulness

Prior. Thou'st done an evil deed—
For sin is of the soul, and thine is tainted—
But most I blame thee, that from thy soul's guardian
Thou hiddest thy secret guilt.

Imo. I knew it not—
Last night, oh ! last night told a dreadful secret—
The moon went down, its sinking ray shut out,
The parting form of one beloved too well.—
The fountain of my heart dried up within me,—
With nought that loved me, and with nought to love
I stood upon the desert earth alone—
I stood and wondered at my desolation—
For I had spurned at every tie for him,
And hardly could I beg from injured hearts
The kindness that my desperate passion scorned—
And in that deep and utter agony,
Though then, than ever most unfit to die,
I fell upon my knees, and prayed for death.

Prior. And did deserve it, wert thou meet for it—
Art thou a wife and mother, and canst speak
Of life rejected by thy desperate passion—
These bursting tears, wrung hands, and burning words,
Are these the signs of penitence or passion ?
Thou comest to me, for to my ear alone
May the deep secret of thy heart be told,
And fancy riot in the luscious poison—
Fond of the misery we paint so well,
Proud of the sacrifice of broken hearts,
We pour on heav'n's dread ear, what man's would
shrink from—

Yea, make a merit of the impious insult,
And wrest the functions of mine holy office
To the foul ministry of earthly passion.

Imo. Why came I here, I had despair at home—
Where shall the wretch resort whom Heaven forsakes?

Prior. Thou hast forsaken Heaven.
Speed to thy castle, shut thy chamber door;
Bind fast thy soul by every solemn vow
Never to hold communion with that object—
If still thy wishes contradict thy prayers,
If still thy heart's responses yield no harmony—
Weary thy saint with agonies of prayer;
On the cold marble quench thy burning breast;
Number with every bead a tear of soul;
Press to thy heart the cross, and bid it banish
The form that would usurp its image there—

Imo. (kneeling) One parting word—

Prior. No, not one parting look—
One parting thought I charge thee on thy soul.

Imo. (turning away) He never loved.—

Prior. Why clingest thou to my raiment?
Thy grasp of grief is stronger on my heart—
For sterner oft our words than feelings are.

Enter 1st Monk and Page.

Monk. Hail, holy prior, and hail thou noble dame,
With joyful heart I break upon your privacy—

St. Aldobrand before his own good gates
Doth rein his war-steed's pride ; the warder's horn
Full merrily rings his peal of welcome home—
I hied me onward with the joyful tidings
To greet his happy dame.

Imo. My thanks await them.—

Prior. Now, by my beads the news is wond'rous
welcome—

Hath thy brave lord in safety reached his home—
Praise to St. Anselm who ne'er leaves his servants.
My rosary hath been well told for him—
(Clear thy dimmed brow, for shame, hie to thy lord,
And shew a dame's true duty in his welcome)
Came with thy lord the knights of good St. Anselm
Bearing the banner of their guardian saint
Safe from the infidel scathe—

Page. They come with speed—
Though lated in the forest's wildering maze,
Last night their shelter was the broad brown oak—

Pri. High praise be given—haste, summon all our
brethren ;

Th' occasion, noble dame, doth call me from thee—
So Benedicite—

[*Exeunt.*

Imo. (*alone*) That word should mean—
A blessing rest on me—I am not blest—
I'm weary of this conflict of the heart—
These dying struggles of reluctant duty—

These potent throes of wild convulsive passion.
Would I were seared in guilt, or strong in innocence—
I dare not search my heart ; some iron vow
Shall bind me down in passive wretchedness,
And mock the force of my rebellious heart
To break its rivetting holds—

[*As she kneels, enter Bertram.*

Ha ! art thou there?—

Come kneel with me, and witness to the vow
I offer to renounce thee, and to die—

Ber. Nay, it is meet that we renounce each other—
Have we not been a miserable pair?
Hath not our fatal passion cursed, not blessed us?—
Had we not loved, how different were our fates ;
For thou hadst been a happy honoured dame,
And I had slept the sleep of those that dream not—
But life was dear, while Imogine did love.

Imo. Witness my vow—while I have breath to
speak it—

Ber. Then make it thus—why dost thou shrink
from me?

Despair hath its embrace as well as passion—
May I not hold thee in these folded arms?
May I not clasp thee to this blasted heart?
When the rich soil teemed with youth's generous
flowers—
I felt thee sunshine—now thy rayless light

Falls like the cold moon on a blasted heath
Mocking its desolation—speak thy vow—
I will not chide thee if the words should kill me—

Imo. (*sinking into his arms*). I cannot utter
it—

Ber. Have we not loved, as none have ever loved,
And must we part as none have ever parted?
I know thy lord is near; I know his towers
Must shut thee from my sight—the curfew hour
Will send me on a far and fearful journey—
Give me one hour, nor think thou givest too much,
When grief is all the boon.—

Imo. One hour to *thee*?

Ber. When the cold moon gleams on thy castle
walls,

Wilt thou not seek the spot where last we met?
That be our parting spot—Oh Imogine—
Heaven that denies the luxury of bliss
Shall yield at least the luxury of anguish,
And teach us the stern pride of wretchedness—

Our parting hour be at the dim moonlight,
And we will make that hour of parting dearer
Than years of happy love—what recollections—
What rich and burning tears—in that blessed hour
Our former hearts shall glide into our breasts,
Mine free from care, as thine was light of sorrow—
That hour shall light my parting step of darkness—

Imogine's form did gleam on my last glance,
Imogine's breath did mix with my last sigh,
Imogine's tear doth linger on my cheek,
But ne'er must dew my grave—

Imo. I am desperate
To say I'll meet thee, but I will, will meet thee ;
No future hour can rend my heart like this
Save that which breaks it.—

[*The child runs in, and clings to Imogine.*]

Child. My father is returned, and kissed and blessed
me—

Imo. (*falling on the child's neck.*) What have I
done, my child ; forgive thy mother.

Ber. (*Surveying her with stern contempt.*)
Woman, oh woman, and an urchin's kiss
Rends from thy heart thy love of many years—
Go, virtuous dame, to thy most happy lord,
And Bertram's image taint your kiss with poison.

[*Exit Bertram.*]

Imo. (*Alone*) 'Tis but the last—and I have sworn
to meet him
My boy, my boy, thy image will protect me.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A dark night under the Castle Walls;—Bertram appears in a state of the utmost agitation;—he extends his arms towards a spot where the Moon has disappeared.

Ber. Thou hidest away thy face, and wilt not view
me,

All the bright lights of heaven are dark above me—

Beneath the black cope of this starless night

There lurks no darker soul—

My fiend-like glory hath departed from me—

Bertram hath nought above the meanest losel—

I should have bearded him in halls of pride—

I should have mated him in fields of death—

Not stol'n upon his secret bower of peace,

And breathed a serpent's venom on his flower.

(He looks up at the casement of the tower, at which a light appears, he gazes on it.)—She is there—

She weeps—no husband wipes her tears away—
She weeps—no babe doth cheer the guilty mother.
Aldobrand—No—I never will forgive thee,
For I am sunk beneath thee—Who art thou?

Enter Two of Bertram's Band.

1st. Rob. Why dost thou wander in the woods alone,
Leaving thy mates to play with idle hilts,
Or dream with monks o'er rosary and relic?
Give us a deed to do.

Ber. Yes, ye are welcome,
Your spirits shall be proud—ho—hear ye, villains,
I know ye both—ye are slaves that for a ducat
Would rend the screaming infant from the breast
To plunge it in the flames;
Yea, draw your keen knives cross a father's throat,
And carve with them the bloody meal ye earned;
Villains, rejoice, your leader's crimes have purged you,
You punished guilt—I preyed on innocence—
Ye have beheld me fallen—begone—begone.

1st. Rob. Why then, Heaven's benison be with you,
Thou'lt need it if thou tarriest longer here.

Ber. How, slave, what fear you?

2d. Rob. Fly; this broad land hath not one spot to
hide thee,
Danger and death await thee in those walls.

Ber. They'd fell a blasted tree—well—let it fall—
But though the perished trunk feel not the wound ;
Woe to the smiting hand—its fall may crush him.

1st. Rob. Lord Aldobrand
Holds high commission from his sovereign liege
To hunt thy outlaw'd life through Sicily.

Ber. (wildly.) Who—what—

2d. Rob. We mingled with the men at arms
As journeying home. Their talk was of Count Bertram,
Whose vessel had from Manfredonia's coast
Been traced towards this realm.

1st. Rob. And if on earth his living form were found,
Lord Aldobrand had power to seal his doom.
Some few did pity him.

Ber. (bursting into ferocity.) Villain, abhorred
villain.

Hath he not pushed me to extremity ?

Are these wild weeds, these scarred and scathed limbs,
This wasted frame, a mark for human malice ?

• There have been those who from the high bark's side
Have whelmed their enemy in the flashing deep ;
But who hath watch'd to see his struggling hands,
To hear the sob of death ?—Fool—ideot—ideot—
'Twas but e'en now, I would have knelt to him
With the prostration of a conscious villain ;
I would have crouched beneath his spurning feet ;
I would have felt their trampling tread, and blessed it—

For I had injured him—and mutual injury
Had freed my withered heart—Villain—I thank thee.

“ 1st. *Rob.* What wilt thou do? shall we prepare
for blows?

“ *Ber.* Behold me, Earth, what is the life he hunts
for?

“ Come to my cave, thou human hunter, come ;
“ For thou hast left thy prey no other lair,
“ But the bleak rock, or howling wilderness ;
“ Cheer up thy pack of fanged and fleshed hounds,
“ Flash all the flames of hell upon its darkness,
“ Then enter if thou darest.
“ Lo, there the crushed serpent coils to sting thee,
“ Yea, spend his life upon the mortal throe.”

1st. *Rob.* Wilt thou fly?

Ber. Never—on this spot I stand

The champion of despair—this arm my brand—
This breast my panoply—and for my gage—
(Oh thou hast reft from me all knightly pledge)
Take these black hairs torn from a head that hates
thee—

Deep be their dye, before that pledge is ransomed—
In thine heart's blood or mine—why strivest thou with
me?

(*Wild with passion.*)

Lord Aldobrand, I brave thee in thy halls,
Wrecked, famished, wrung in heart, and worn in
limb—

For bread of thine this lip hath never stained—
I bid thee to the conflict—aye, come on—
Coward—hast armed thy vassals?—come then all—
Follow—ye shall have work enough—Follow.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Imagine in her apartment—a lamp burning on the Table—She walks some time in great agitation and then pushes the light away.

Imo. Away, thou glarest on me, thy light is hateful;
Whom doth the dark wind chide so hollowly?
The very stones shrink from my steps of guilt,
All lifeless things have come to life to curse me:
Oh! that a mountain's weight were cast on me;
Oh! that the wide, wild ocean heaved o'er me;
Oh! that I could into the earthy centre
Sink and be nothing.
Sense, memory, feeling, life extinct and swallowed,
With things that are not, or have never been,
Lie down and sleep the everlasting sleep—

(*She sinks on the ground.*)

If I run mad, some wild word will betray me,
Nay—let me think—what am I?—no, what was I?

(*A long pause.*)

I was the honoured wife of Aldobrand;
I am the scorned minion of a ruffian.

Enter Clotilda.

Imo. Who art thou that thus comest on me in darkness?

Clot. The taper's blaze doth make it bright as noon.

Imo. I saw thee not, till thou wert close to me.
So steal the steps of those who watch the guilty ;
How dar'est thou gaze thus earnestly upon me ;
What seest thou in my face ?

Clot. A mortal horror.

If aught but godless souls at parting bear
The lineaments of despair, such face is thine.

Imo. See'st thou despair alone ?
Nay, mock me not, for thou hast read more deeply,
Else why that piercing look.

Clot. I meant it not—

But since thy lonely walk upon the rampart—
Strange hath been thy demeanour, all thy maidens
Do speak in busy whispers of its wildness—

Imo. Oh hang me shuddering on the baseless crag—
The vampire's wing, the wild-worm's sting be on me,
But hide me, mountains, from the man I've injured—

Clot. Whom hast thou injured ?

Imo. Whom doth woman injure ?
Another daughter dries a father's tears ;
Another sister claims a brother's love ;
An injured husband hath no other wife,
Save her who wrought him shame.

Clot. I will not hear thee,

Imo. We met in madness, and in guilt we parted—

Oh! I see horror rushing to thy face—

Do not betray me, I am penitent—

Do not betray me, it will kill my Lord—

Do not betray me, it will kill my boy,

My little one that loves me.

Clot. Wretched woman—

Whom guilt hath flung at a poor menial's feet—

Rise, rise, how canst thou keep thy fatal secret?

Those fixt and bloodshot eyes, those wringing hands—

Imo. And were I featureless, inert, and marble—

Th' accuser *here* would speak—

Clot. Wilt thou seek comfort from the holy prior?

Imo. When I was innocent, I sought it of him—

For if his lip of wrath refused my pardon,

My heart would have absolved me—

Now when that heart condemns me, what avails

The pardon of my earthly erring judge?

Clot. Yet, hie from hence, upon their lady's bower
No menial dares intrude.

Imo. That seat of honour—

My guilty steps shall never violate—

What fearful sound is that?

Clot. Alas, a feller trial doth abide thee;

I hear thy lord's approach.

Madness is in thy looks, he'll know it all—

Imo. Why, I am mad with horror and remorse—
He comes, he comes in all that murderous kindness ;
Oh Bertram's curse is on me.

Enter Aldobrand.

Ald. How fares my dame? give me thy white hand,
love.

Oh it is pleasant for a war-worn man
To couch him on the downy lap of comfort—
And on his rush-strewn floors of household peace
Hear his doffed harness ring—Take thou my helmet ;
(*To page who goes out.*)

Well may man toil for such an hour as this.

Imo. (*standing timidly near him*)
Yea, happier they, who on the bloody field
Stretch when their toil is done—

Ald.—What means my love?

Imo. Is there not rest among the quiet dead ;
But is there surely rest in mortal dwellings?

Ald. Deep loneliness hath wrought this mood in
thee,

For like a cloistered votaress, thou hast kept,
Thy damsels tell me, this lone turret's bound—
A musing walk upon the moonlight ramparts,
Or thy lute's mournful vespers all thy cheering—
Not thine to parley at the latticed casement
With wandering wooer, or—

Imo. (wildly) For mercy's sake forbear—

Ald. How farest thou?

Imo. (recovering) well—well—a sudden pain o' th' heart.

Ald. Knowest thou the cause detained me hence so long,

And which again must call me soon away?

Imo. (trying to recollect herself)—Was it not war?

Ald.—Aye, and the worst war, love—

When our fell foes are our own countrymen.

Thou knowest the banished Bertrain—why, his name
Doth blanch thy altered cheek, as if his band

With their fierce leader, were within these towers—

Imo. Mention that name no more—on with thy tale—

Ald. I need not tell thee, how his mad ambition
Strove with the crown itself for sovereignty—

The craven monarch was his subject's slave—

In that dread hour my country's guard I stood,

From the state's vitals tore the coiled serpent,

First hung him writhing up to public scorn,

Then flung him forth to ruin.

Imo. Thou need'st not tell it—

Ald. Th' apostate would be great even in his fall—

On Manfredonia's wild and wooded shore

His desperate followers awed the regions round—

Late from Toranto's gulf his bark was traced
Right to these shores, perchance the recent storm
Hath spared me further search, but if on earth
His living form be found—

Imo. Think'st thou he harbours here—
Go, crush thy foe—for he is mine and thine—
But tell me not when thou hast done the deed.

Ald. Why art thou thus, my Imogine, my love?
In former happier hours thy form and converse
Had, like thy lute, that gracious melancholy
Whose most sad sweetness is in tune with joy—
Perchance I've been to thee a rugged mate—
My soldier's mood is all too lightly chased—
But when the gust hath spent its short-liv'd fury,
I bowed before thee with a child's submission,
And wooed thee with a weeping tenderness.

Imo. (*after much agitation*) Be generous, and
stab me—

Ald. Why is this?
I have no skill in woman's changeful moods,
Tears without grief and smiles without a joy—
My days have passed away 'mid war and toil—
The grinding casque hath worn my locks of youth;
Beshrew its weight, it hath ploughed furrows there,
Where time ne'er drove its share—mine heart's sole
wish
Is to sit down in peace among its inmates—

To see mine home for ever bright with smiles,
'Mid thoughts of past, and blessed hopes of future,
Glide through the vacant hours of waning life—
Then die the blessed death of aged honour,
Grasping thy hand of faith, and fixing on thee
Eyes that, though dim in death, are bright with love.

Imo. Thou never wilt—thou never wilt on me—
Ne'er erred the prophet heart that grief inspired
Though joy's illusions mock their votarist—
I'm dying, Aldobrand, a malady
Preys on my heart, that medicine cannot reach,
Invisible and cureless—look not on me
With looks of love, for then it stings me deepest—
When I am cold, when my pale sheeted corse
Sleeps the dark sleep no venom'd tongue can wake
List not to evil thoughts of her whose lips
Have then no voice to plead—
Take to thine arms some honourable dame,
(Blessed will she be within thine arms of honour)
And—if he dies not on his mother's grave—
Still love my boy as if that mother lived.

Ald. Banish such gloomy dreams—
'Tis solitude that makes thee speak thus sadly—
No longer shalt thou pine in lonely halls.
Come to thy couch, my love—

Imo. Stand off—unhand me,
Forgive me, oh my husband ;

I have a vow—a solemn vow is on me—
And black perdition gulf my perjured soul
If I ascend the bed of peace and honour
’Till that——

Ald. ’Till what?

Imo. My penance is accomplished.

Ald. Nay, Heav’n forefend I should disturb thy
orisons—

The reverend prior were fittest counsellor—
Farewell!—but in the painful hour of penance
Think upon me, and spare thy tender frame.

Imo. And dost thou leave me with such stabbing
kindness?

Ald. (*to Clotilda who goes out*) Call to my page
To bring the torch and light me to my chamber—

Imo. (*with a sudden impulse falling on her knees*)
Yet, ere thou goest, forgive me, oh my husband—

Ald. Forgive thee!—What?—

Imo. Oh, we do all offend—

There’s not a day of wedded life, if we
Count at its close the little, bitter sum
Of thoughts, and words, and looks unkind and froward,
Silence that chides and woundings of the eye—
But prostrate at each others’ feet, we should
Each night forgiveness ask—then what should I?—

Ald. (*not hearing the last words*) Why take it
freely;

I well may pardon, what I ne'er have felt.

Imo. (following him on her knees, and kissing his hand)

Dost thou forgive me from thine inmost soul—

God bless thee, oh, God bless thee——

Ald. Farewell—mine eyes grow heavy, thy sad talk

Hath stolen a heaviness upon my spirits—

I will unto my solitary couch—Farewell.

[Exit Aldobrand.]

Imo. There is no human heart can bide this conflict—

All dark and horrible,—Bertram must die—

But oh, within these walls, before mine eyes,

Who would have died for him, while life had value ;—

He shall not die,—Clotilda, ho, come forth—

He yet may be redeemed, though I am lost—

Let him depart, and pray for her he ruin'd.

Hah ! was it fancy's work—I hear a step—

It hath the speech-like thrilling of *his* tread :

It is himself.

Enter Bertram.

It is a crime in me to look on thee—

But in whate'er I do there now is crime—

Yet wretched thought still struggles for thy safety—

Fly, while my lips without a crime may warn thee—

Would thou hadst never come, or sooner parted.
Oh God—he heeds me not;
Why comest thou thus, what is thy fearful business?
I know thou comest for evil, but its purport
I ask my heart in vain.

Ber. Guess it, and spare me. (*A long pause, during which she gazes at him.*)

Canst thou not read it in my face?

Imo. I dare not;
Mixt shades of evil thought are darkening there;
But what my fears do indistinctly guess
Would blast me to behold—(*turns away, a pause.*)

Ber. Dost thou not hear it in my very silence?
That which no voice can tell, doth tell itself.

Imo. My harassed thought hath not one point of fear,
save that it must not think.

Ber. (*throwing his dagger on the ground.*)
Speak thou for me,
Shew me the chamber where thy husband lies,
The morning must not see us both alive.

Imo. (*screaming and struggling with him.*)
Ah! horror! horror! off—withstand me not,
I will arouse the castle, rouse the dead,
To save my husband; “villain, murderer, monster,
“Dare the bayed lioness, but fly from me.

“*Ber.* Go, wake the castle with thy frantic cries;
“Those cries that tell my secret, blazon thine.

" Yea, pour it on thine husband's blasted ear.

" *Imo.* Perchance his wrath may kill me in its mercy.

" *Ber.* No, hope not such a fate of mercy from him;

" He'll curse thee *with his pardon.*

" And would his death-fixed eye be terrible

" As its ray bent in love on her that wronged him ?

" And would his dying groan affright thine ear

" Like words of peace spoke to thy guilt—in vain ?

" *Imo.* I care not, I am reckless, let me perish.

" *Ber.* No, thou must live amid a hissing world,

" A thing that mothers warn their daughters from,

" A thing the menials that do tend thee scorn,

" Whom when the good do name, they tell their beads,

" And when the wicked think of, they do triumph ;

" Canst thou encounter this?

" *Imo.* I must encounter it—I have deserved it ;

" Begone, or my next cry shall wake the dead.

" *Ber.* Hear me.

" *Imo.* No parley, tempter, fiend, avaunt.

" *Ber.* *Thy son—(she stands stupified.)*

" Go, take him trembling in thy hand of shame,

" A victim to the shrine of public scorn—

" Poor boy ! his sire's worst foe might pity him,

" Albeit his mother will not—

" Banished from noble halls, and knightly converse,

" Devouring his young heart in loneliness

" With bitter thought—my mother was—a wretch.

Imo. (falling at his feet.)

I am a wretch—but—who hath made me so?
I'm writhing like a worm, beneath thy spurn.
Have pity on me, I have had much wrong.

Ber. My heart is as the steel within my grasp.

Imo. (still kneeling.) Thou hast cast me down from
light,

From my high sphere of purity and peace,
Where once I walked in mine uprightness, blessed—
Do not thou cast me into utter darkness.

Ber. (looking on her with pity for a moment.) Thou
fairest flower—

Why didst thou fling thyself across my path,
My tiger spring must crush thee in its way,
But cannot pause to pity thee.

Imo. Thou must,

For I am strong in woes—I ne'er reproached thee—
I plead but with my agonies and tears—
Kind, gentle Bertram, my beloved Bertram,
For thou wert gentle once, and once beloved,
Have mercy on me—Oh thou couldst not think it—
(*Looking up, and seeing no relenting in his face, she
starts up wildly.*)

By heaven and all its host, he shall not perish.

Ber. By hell and all its host, he shall not live.
This is no transient flash of fugitive passion—
His death hath been my life for years of misery—

Which else I had not lived—
Upon that thought, and not on food I fed,
Upon that thought, and not on sleep I rested—
I come to do the deed that must be done—
Nor thou, nor sheltering angels, could prevent me.

Imo. But man shall—miscreant—help.

Ber. Thou callest in vain—

The armed vassals all are far from succour—
Following St. Anselm's votarists to the convent—
My band of blood are darkening in their halls—
Wouldst have him butchered by their ruffian hands
That wait my bidding ?

Imo. (*falling on the ground.*)—Fell and horrible
I'm sealed, shut down in ransomless perdition.

Ber. Fear not, my vengeance will not yield its prey,
He shall fall nobly, by my hand shall fall—
But still and dark the summons of its fate,
So winds the coiled serpent round his victim.

(*A horn sounds without.*)

Whence was that blast ? those felon slaves are come—
He shall not perish by their ruffian hands.

[*Exit Bertram.*

Imo. (*gazing round her, and slowly recovering
recollection, repeats his last words*)—He shall
not perish—

Oh ! it was all a dream—a horrid dream—

He was not here—it is impossible—

(Tottering towards the door.)

I will not be alone another moment

Lest it do come again—where, where art thou?—

Enter Clotilda.

Clo. Didst thou not call me?—at thy voice of anguish

I hasten, though I cannot hear thy words—

Imo. Let me lean on thee, let me hold thee fast—

Yea, strongly grasp some strong substantial thing

To scare away foul forms of things that are not—

They have been with me in my loneliness.

Oh, I have had such dark and horrid thoughts,

But they are gone—we will not think of them—

Clo. What hath been with thee?

Imo. Something dark that hovered [*deliriously.*

Upon the confines of unmingling worlds,

In dread for life—for death too sternly definite,

Something the thought doth try in vain to follow—

Through mist and twilight—

Clo. Woe is me ! methought

I saw the form of Bertram as I entered—

Imo. (*Starting with sudden recollection*)

Oh God—it was no vision then, thou sawest him—

Give me my phrensy back—one moment's thought—

'Tis done, by Heaven, 'tis done—

I will fall down before his injured feet,
I'll tell him all my shame, and all my guilt,
My wrongs shall be a weapon in his hand,
And if it fail, this tainted frame of sin
Shall fall a shield before my husband's breast—
I'll wake the castle—wake the faithful vassals
I'll——(*going she stops suddenly*).
I cannot be the herald of my shame,
Go thou, and tell them what I cannot utter.

Clo. Oh, yet forgive me, through that gloomy
passage

I dare not venture, lest that dark form meet me.

Imo. Nay, thou must go, 'tis I that dare not
venture—

For, if I see him in his holy sleep
Resting so calmly on the bed I've wronged,
My heart will burst, and he must die warned—

[*Exit Clotilda.*

Imo. (*Listening after her*).

How long she lingers—aye—he knows my guilt
Even from this untold summons—aye—my boy
They'll clothe thee with *my* shame.
Hush—look—all's still within—an horrid stillness—
Perchance, that she, even she is bribed to aid—
Woe's me, who now can trust a menial's faith,
When that his wedded wife hath done him wrong—

Enter Clotilda.

Clo. All's safe—all's well—

Imo. What meanest thou by those words?—
For sounds of comfort to my blasted ear
Do ring a death-peal—

Clo. Hearest thou not the horn?

Imo. I heard no horn, I only heard a voice
That menaced murder—

Clo. Oh! the horn did sound—
And with it came a blessed messenger,
St. Anselm's knights within their patron's walls
Do hold a solemn feast, and o'er his shrine
They hang the holy banner of his blessing—
Full swiftly came the summons to thy lord
To join them in their solemn ceremony—
Lord Aldobrand with few attendants gone;
Though late the hour, and dark the way; ere this
Hath measured half the distance

Imo. (*throwing herself vehemently on her knees.*)
Thank God, thank God—Heaven bless the gallant
knights!
Then he is safe until the morning's dawn.

Enter Page.

Imo. Speak—who art thou?

Page. Dost thou not know me, lady?

Imo. Well, well, I reckon not—wherefore art thou come ?

Page. So fierce the mountain-stream comes roaring down—

The rivulet that bathes the convent walls
Is now a foaming flood—upon its brink
Thy lord and his small train do stand appalled—
With torch and bell from their high battlements
The monks do summon to the pass in vain ;
He must return to-night.

Imo. Tis false, he must not—Oh, I shall run mad—
Go thou, and watch upon the turret's height—(*to Clotilda*)

The flood must fall—the bright moon must shine forth ;
Go, go and tell me so—why stayest thou here (*to page*)
Begone, and do not heed, and do not watch me.

[*Exit page.*

I've lost the courage of mine innocence,
And dare not have the courage of despair—
The evil strength that gave temptation danger,
Yet cannot give remorse its energy.

Enter Clotilda.

Clot. The night is calm and clear, and o'er the plain
Nor arms do glimmer on my straining sight,
Nor through the stilly air, did horseman's tramp
Ring in faint echo from the hollow hill,
Though my fixed ear did list to giddiness—
Be comforted, he must have passed the stream—

Imo. Yea, I am comforted, 'tis blessed comfort—
He must have passed the stream—Oh pitying Heaven,
Accept these tears, these are not sinful tears—
Tell me again that he will not return.

Clot. I soothly say, he must have passed the stream.
(*The horn is heard without, announcing Aldobrand's return.*)

Clot. 'Tis Aldobrand, he's lost—we all are lost—
(*without*)

Imo. Now Heaven have mercy on thy soul, my
husband,
For man hath none—Is there no hope—no help?—
(*Looking towards the door, across which the band of
Bertram march silently and range themselves*)
None, none—his gathering band are dark around me—
I will make one last effort for their mercy—
If they be human, they will listen to me—
(*Rushing towards them, they step forward and point
their swords to resist her.*)
Oh, there is nothing merciful in their looks ;
Oh, there is nothing human in their hearts ;
They are not men—Hell hath sent up its devils.
There is no hope—I'll hear his dying groan—
I'll hear his last cry for that help that comes not—
I'll hear him call upon his wife and child—
I will not hear it.—(*stopping her ears.*)
Oh that my tightened heart had breath for prayer—
Mercy, oh mercy, Bertram.

(Another horn heard without, she starts and staggers towards the door ;—a noise of swords within).

Ald. *(within)* Off, villain, off—

Ber. Villain, to thy soul—for I am Bertram.

(Aldobrand retreating before Bertram, rushes on the stage, and falls at Imogene's feet.)

Ald. Let me die at her feet, my wife, my wife—
Wilt thou not staunch the life-blood streaming from
me ?

Wilt thou not look at me ?—Oh save my boy *(dies)*.

*(Imogene at the name of her son, rushes off ;—
Bertram stands over the body holding the dagger
with his eyes fixed on it ;—The band fill up the back.*

The curtain drops.

End of Fourth Act.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The Chapel in the Convent of St. Anselm, the shrine splendidly illuminated and decorated. The Prior rising from before the altar.

Enter 1st Monk.

Monk. How gay and glorious doth our temple seem!
Look round thee, father.

Prior. I feel no joy like that the faithful feel,
Viewing the glories of their holy place ;
An horror of great darkness is upon me,
A fearful dread hath overwhelmed me.

Monk. Wherefore ?

Prior. As at the shrine I knelt but now in prayer.
Nor sleep, nor waking, but a horrible vision
Fell on my tranced spirit, and I dreamed—
On the dark mountains was the vision wrought
Of mist, and moonlight, mingling fitfully—
A brinded wolf did tear a struggling lion
While the cowed lioness stood trembling by—
I wist not what it meant, but in mine agony,
I prayed to be released, and as I woke

The echoes gave me back my slumbering cries—

Monk. 'Tis a good dream, and bodeeth something good.—

Prior. How sayest thou, good?

Monk. I dreamed it on that night
Lord Aldobrand did from his castle come,
And blessed days of peace have followed it.—

Prior. Heaven grant they may!

Monk. Lo, where the knights approach.

Enter the Knights in solemn procession with the consecrated banner.

The Prior advances to meet them.

Prior. 'Hail! champions of the church and of the land,

The banner of our holy saint in fight
Full bravely have ye borne, and scatheless back.
From unblest weapon and from arm unholy
Restored it to the power whose might struck for you—

The Music commences, the Knights and Monks advance in procession, the Prior bearing the banner, which he has received from the principal Knight.

Hymn.

Guardian of the good and brave
Their banner o'er thy shrine we wave—

Monk, who counts the midnight bead—
 Knight, who spurs the battle steed,—
 He, who dies 'mid clarion's swelling
 He, who dies 'mid requiem's knelling—
 Alike thy care, whose grace is shed
 On cowed scalp and helmed head—
 Thy temple of the rock and flood
 For ages 'mid their wrath has stood—
 Thy midnight bell, through storm and calm
 Hath shed on listening ear its balm.—

(The Hymn is interrupted by 3a' Monk rushing in distractedly.)

3d Monk. Forbear—forbear—

Prior Why comest thou thus with voice of desperate
 fear,

Breaking upon our solemn ceremony?

3d Monk. Despair is round our walls, a wailing
 spirit

Yea, the mixt wailings of the infernal host
 Burst deaffeningly amid the shuddering blast—
 No earthly lip might utterance give to such—

Prior. Thou'rt wild with watching, fear and lone-
 liness

In thy sole turret that o'erhangs the flood.
 Of winds and waves, the strangely-mingled sounds
 Ride heavily the night-wind's hollow sweep,
 Mocking the sounds of human lamentation—

3d Monk. Hush, look, it comes again (*a scream*)

Prior. Defend us, heaven,

'Twas horrible indeed—'tis in our walls—

Ha, through the cloister there doth something glide

That seems in truth not earthly—

*Imogene rushes in with her child, her hair dishevelled,
her dress stained with blood.*

Imo. Save me—save me—

Prior. Save thee, from what?

Imo. From earth, and heaven, and hell

All, all are armed, and rushing in pursuit—

Prior. Monks and knights gathering around, and
speaking together.

All. Who—what—what hath befallen thee. Speak.

Imo. Oh wait not here to speak, but fly to save
him,

For he lies low upon the bloody ground—

Knight. She speaks in madness, ask the frightened
boy,

Hath aught befallen his father?—

Imo. Ask him not—

He hath no father—we have murdered him—

Traitress and murderer—we have murdered him—

They'll not believe me for mine agony—

Is not his very blood upon my raiment?

Reeks not the charnel—stream of murder from me?

Prior and Monks vehemently. Impossible.

Imo. Aye, heaven and earth do cry, impossible,
The shuddering angels round th' eternal throne
Vailing themselves in glory shriek impossible,
But hell doth know it true—

Prior. (*advancing to her solemnly.*)
Spirits of madness, that possess this woman
Depart I charge you, trouble her no more,
Till she do answer to mine adjuration—
Who did the deed?

*Imagine sinks gradually from his fixed eye, till
hiding her face, she falls on the ground in silence.*

Knight. I do believe it, horrid as it seems—

1st Monk. I'd not believe her words, I do her
silence.

Prior. (*who has fallen back in horror into the
arms of the monks, rushes forward*)

Oh! draw your swords, brave knights, and sheathe
them not—

Slack not to wield the sword of Aldobrand,
Arise, pursue, avenge, exterminate
With all the implements of mortal might,
And all the thunders of the church's curse—

*Exeunt tumultuously knights, monks, and attend-
ants, the prior is following them, Imogene still
kneeling grasps him by the robe.*

Prior. (*With mixt emotion, turning on her*)
Thou art a wretch, I did so love and honour thee—

Thou'st broke mine aged heart—that look again—
Woman, let go thy withering hold—

Imo. I dare not—

I have no hold but upon heaven and thee.

Prior. (*tearing himself from her*)

I go, yet ere mine aged feet do bear me
To the dark chace of that fell beast of blood—
Hear thou, and—hope not—if by word or deed
Yea, by invisible thought, unuttered wish
Thou hast been ministrant to this horrid act—
With full collected force of malediction

I do pronounce unto thy soul—despair— [Exit.

Imo. (*looking round on the chapel, after a long pause*)

They've left me—all things leave me—all things
human—

Follower and friend—last went the man of God—
The last—but yet he went—

Child.——— I will not leave thee—

Imo. My son, my son, was that thy voice—
When heaven and angels, earth and earthly things
Do leave the guilty in their guiltiness—
A cherub's voice doth whisper in a child's.
There is a shrine within thy little heart
Where I will hide, nor hear the trump of doom—

Child. Dear mother, take me home—

Imo. Thou hast no home—

She, whom thou callest mother left thee none—
We're hunted from mankind—(*sinking down*)
Here will we lie in darkness down together,
And sleep a dreamless sleep—what form is that—
Why have they laid him there? (*recoiling*)
Plain in the gloomy depth he lies before me
The cold blue wound whence blood hath ceased to
flow,

The stormy clenching of the bared teeth—
The gory socket that the balls have burst from—
I see them all—(*shrieking*)
It moves—it moves—it rises—it comes on me—
'Twill break th' eternal silence of the grave—
'Twill wind me in its creaking marrowless arms.
Hold up thy hands to it, it was thy father—
Ah, it would have thee too, off—save me—off—
(*Rushes out with the child.*)

Scene changes to the Castle—Prior enters alone—

Prior. His halls are desolate—the lonely walls
Echo my single tread—through the long galleries—
The hurrying knights can trace nor friend nor foe—
The murderer hath escaped—the saints forgive me,
I feel mine heart of weakness is come back,
Almost I wish he had—ha, here is blood
Mine ebbing spirits lacked this stirring impulse—
Ho—haste ye here—the shedder must be near—

[Enter the knights, monks, &c. supporting Clotilda.]

Knight. We found this trembling maid, alone,
concealed—

Prior. Speak—tell of Bertram—of thy lord—the
vassals—

Clot. Oh, give me breath, for I am weak with fear—
Short was the bloody conflict of the night—
The few remaining vassals fled in fear—
The bandit's loaded with the castle's spoil—
Are gone—I saw them issue from the walls—
But yet I dared not venture forth, while Bertram—

All. Go on—go on—

Clot. He bore the murdered body—
Alone into yon chamber [pointing]
I heard the heavy weight trail after him—
I heard his bloody hands make fast the door—
There hath he sat in dread society,
The corse and murderer are there together.

(*The Knights draw their swords, and rush towards the door.*)

Prior. (*interposing*) Hold, champions hold, this
warfare is for me.

The arm of flesh were powerless on him now—
Hark how the faltering voice of feeble age
Shall bow him to its bidding. Ho, come forth

[striking the door.]

Thou man of blood, come forth, thy doom awaits thee.

[*Bertram opens the door, and advances slowly, his dress is stained with blood, and he grasps the hilt of a dagger in his hand—his look is so marked and grand, that the knights, &c. make room for him, and he advances to the front of the stage untouched.*

All. Who art thou?

Ber. I am the murderer—Wherefore are ye come?—

Prior.—This majesty of guilt doth awe my spirit—
Is it th' embodied fiend who tempted him
Sublime in guilt?

Ber. Marvel not at me—Wist ye whence I come?
The tomb—where dwell the dead—and I dwelt with
him—

Till sense of life dissolved away within me—

(*Looking round ghastly,*)

I am amazed to see ye living men,
I deemed that when I struck the final blow
Mankind expired, and we were left alone,
The corse and I were left alone together,
The only tenants of a blasted world
Dispeopled for my punishment, and changed
Into a penal orb of desolation—

Prior. Advance and bind him, are ye men and
armed?—

What, must this palsied hand be first on him?—
Advance, and seize him, ere his voice of blasphemy
Shall pile the roof in ruins o'er our heads—

Bar.—Advance, and seize me, ye who smile at
blood—

For every drop of mine a life shall pay—

I'm naked, famished, faint, my brand is broken—

Hush, mailed champions, on the helpless Bertram—

(They sink back)

Now prove what fell resistance I shall make.

(Throws down the hilt of his dagger.)

There—bind mine arms—if ye do list to bind them—

I came to yield—but not to be subdued—

Prior. Oh thou, who o'er thy stormy grandeur
flingest

A struggling beam that dazzles, awes, and vanishes—

Thou, who dost blend our wonder with our curses—

Why didst thou this ?

Ber. He wronged me, and I slew him—

To man but thee I ne'er had said even this—

To man but thee, I ne'er shall utter more—

Now speed ye swift from questioning to death—

(They surround him.)

One prayer, my executioners, not conquerors—

Be most ingenious in your cruelty—

Let rack and pincer do their full work on me—

'Twill rouse me from that dread unnatural sleep,

In which my soul hath dreamt its dreams of agony—

This is my prayer, ye'll not refuse it to me—

(As they are leading him off, the prior lays hold of him)

Prior. Yet bend thy steeled sinews, bend and pray—
The corse of him thou'st murdered, lies within—

(A long pause)

Ber. I have offended Heaven, but will not mock
it—

Spare me your racks and pincers, spare me words.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

*A dark Wood, in the back Scene a Cavern, Rocks
and Precipices above.—Imogene comes forward.*

Imo. *(Sighing heavily after a long pause.)*

If I could waft away this low-hung mist

That darkens o'er my brow—

If I could but unbind this burning band

That tightens round my heart—

———— Or night or morning is it?

I wist not which, a dull and dismal twilight

Pervading all things, and confounding all things,

Doth hover o'er my senses and my soul—

[Comes forward shuddering.]

The moon shines on me, but it doth not light me ;

The surge glides past me, but it breathes not on me.

My child, my child, where art thou ; come to me—

I know thou hidest thyself for sport to mock me—

Yet come—for I am scared with loneliness—

I'll call on thee no more, lo, there he glides—
And there, and there—he flies from me—he laughs—
I'll sing the songs the churchyard spirits taught me—
I'll sit all night on the grey tombs with thee,
So thou wilt turn to me—he's gone—he's gone.

Enter Clotilda, Prior and Monks surrounding.

Clo. She's here—she's here—and is it thus I see
her?

Prior. All-pitying Heaven—release her from this
misery.

Imo. Away, unhand me, ye are executioners—
I know your horrible errand—who hath sent you?
This is false Bertram's doing—God—oh, God,
How I did love—and how am I requited—
Well, well, accuse me of what crime you will,
I ne'er was guilty of not loving thee—
Oh, spare the torture—and I will confess—
Nay, now there heeds it not—his look's enough—
That smile hath keener edge than many daggers.

[She sinks into Clotilda's arms.]

Clo. How could this wasted form sustain the toils—
Bearing her helpless child.

Imo. (starting up).

I was a mother—'twas my child I bore—
The murderer hung upon my flying steps—
The winds with all their speed had failed to match me.

Oh! how we laughed to see the baffled fiend
Stamp on the shore, and grind his iron teeth—
While safe and far, I braved the wave triumphant,
And shook my dripping locks like trophied banner.
I was a mother then.

Prior. Where is thy child?

Clo. (*Pointing to the cave into which she has looked*)

Oh, he lies cold within his cavern-tomb—
Why dost thou urge her with the horrid theme?

Prior. It was to make one living chord o' th' heart,

And I will try—though mine own breaks at it—
Where is thy child?

Imo. (*with a frantic laugh*)

The forest fiend hath snatched him—
He rides the night-mare through the wizard woods.

Prior. Hopeless and dark—even the last spark extinct.

Enter 3d Monk hastily.

Monk. Bertram—the prisoner Bertram—

Prior. ——— Hush—thou'lt kill her—

Haste thee, Clotilda,—holy brethren, haste;
Remove her hence—aye, even to that sad shelter—
[*Pointing to the cave.*

I see the approaching torches of the guard,

Flash their red light athwart the forest's shade—
Bear her away—oh my weak eye doth fail
Amid these horrors——

[Imogene is torn to the cave, the Prior follows.]

Manet last Monk—Enter a Knight.

Knight. Where is the prior?

Monk. In yonder cave he bides,
And here he wills us wait, for 'tis his purpose
Once more to parley with that wretched man :
How fares he now ?

Knight. As one whose pride of soul
Bears him up singly in this terrible hour—
His step is firm—his eye is fixed—
Nor menace, nor sembling, prayers, nor curses
Can win an answer from his closed lips—
It pities me—for he is brave—most brave—

Monk. Pity him not.

Knight. Hush—lo, he comes——

[A gleam of torch-light falls on the rocks, Bertram, Knights, and Monks, are seen winding down the precipices, the clank of Bertram's chains the only sound heard. They enter, Bertram is between two Monks, who bear torches.]

1st Monk. Leave him with us, and seek the Prior,
I pray you.

Knight. (aside to Monk)

He yet may try escape. We'll watch concealed.

[Exeunt all but Bertram and the two Monks.]

1st Monk. Brief rest is here allowed thee—murderer, pause—

How fearful was our footing on those cliffs,
Where time had worn those steep and rocky steps—
I counted them to thee as we descended,
But thou for pride wast dumb—

Ber. I heard thee not—

2d Monk. Look round thee, murderer, drear thy
resting place—

This is thy latest stage—survey it well—
Lo, as I wave my dimmed torch aloft,
Yon precipice crag seems as if every tread
(Yea, echoed impulse of the passing foot)
Would loose its weight to topple o'er our heads—
Those cavities hollowed by the hand of wrath—
Those deepening gulfs, have they no horrible tenant?
Dare thine eye scan that spectred vacancy?

Ber. I do not mark the things thou tell'st me of.—

1st Monk. Wretch, if thy fear no spectred inmate
shapes—

Ber. (starting from his trance)

Cease, triflers, would you have *me* feel remorse?
Leave me alone—nor cell, nor chain, nor dungeon,
Speaks to the murderer with the voice of solitude.

1st Monk. Thou sayest true—
In cruelty of mercy will we leave thee—

[*Exeunt Monks.*

Ber. If they would go in truth—but what avails it?
[*He meditates in gloomy reflection for some minutes,
and his countenance slowly relaxes from its stern
expression.*

[*The prior enters unobserved, and stands opposite
him in an attitude of supplication, Bertram resumes
his sternness.*

Ber. Why art thou here?—There was an hovering
angel

Just lighting on my heart—and thou hast scared it—

Prior. Yea, rather, with my prayers I'll woo it back.
In very pity of thy soul I come
To weep upon that heart I cannot soften—

[*A long pause.*

Oh! thou art on the verge of awful death—
Think of the moment, when the veiling scarf
That binds thine eyes, shall shut out earth for ever—
When in thy dizzy ear, hurtles the groan
Of those who see the smiting hand upreared,
Thou canst but feel—that moment comes apace—

[*Bertram smiles.*

But terrors move in thee a horrid joy,
And thou art hardened by habitual danger
Beyond the sense of aught but pride in death.

[*Bertram turns away.*

Can I not move thee by one power in nature?
There have been those whom Heaven hath failed to
move,

Yet moved they were by tears of kneeling age.

[*Kneels.*

I wave all pride of ghostly power o'er thee—
I lift no cross, I count no bead before thee—
By the locked agony of these withered hands,
By these white hairs, such as thy father bore.
(Whom thou couldst ne'er see prostrate in the dust)
With toil to seek thee here my limbs do fail,
Send me not broken-hearted back again—
Yield, and relent, Bertram, my son, my son (*weeping*)
(*Looking up eagerly.*)

Did not a gracious drop bedew thine eye?

Ber. Perchance a tear had fallen, hadst thou not
marked it.

Prior. (*rising with dignity.*)

Obdurate soul—then perish in thy pride—
Hear in my voice thy parting angel speak,
Repent—and be forgiven—

(*Bertram turns towards him in strong emotion, when
a shriek is heard from the cavern, Bertram stands
fixed in horror.*)

Prior. (*stretching out his hands towards the ca-
vern.*)

Plead *thou* for me—thou, whose wild voice of horror,

Has pierced the heart my prayers have failed to touch—

Ber. (wildly) What voice was that—yet do not dare to tell me,

Name not her name, I charge thee.

Prior. Imagine—

A maniac through these shuddering woods she wanders,

But in her madness never cursed thy name.

(Bertram attempts to rush towards the cave, but stands stupified on hearing a shriek from the cavern. Imogene rushes from it in distraction, bursting from the arms of Clotilda, the Monks and Knights follow, and remain in the back ground.)

Imo. Away, away, away, no wife—no mother—

(She rushes forward till she meets Bertram, who stands in speechless horror.)

Imo. Give me my husband, give me back my child—

Nay, give me back myself—

They say I'm mad, but yet I know thee well—

Look on me—They would bind these wasted limbs—

I ask but death—death from thy hand—*that hand can deal death well*—and yet thou wilt not give it.

Ber. (gazing on her for a moment, then rushing to the prior, and sinking at his feet.)

Who hath done this? Where are the racks I hoped for?

Am I not weak? am I not humbled now?

(Grocelling at the Prior's feet, and then turning to the Knights.)

Hast thou no curse to blast---no curse for me---

Is there no hand to pierce a soldier's heart?

Is there no foot to crush a felon's neck?

Imo. (Raising herself at the sound of his voice.)

Bertram.

(He rushes towards her, and first repeats Imogene feebly, as he approaches, he utters her name again passionately, but as he draws nearer and sees her look of madness and desperation, he repeats it once more in despair, and does not dare to approach her, till he perceives her falling into Clotilda's arms, and catches her in his.)

Imo. Have I deserved this of thee?—(she dies slowly, with her eyes fixed on Bertram, who continues to gaze on her unconscious of her having expired.)

*Prior. 'Tis past—remove him from the corse—
(The Knights and Monks advance, he waves them off with one hand still supporting the body.)*

Prior. (to the Monks)—Brethren, remove the corse—

Ber. She is not dead—(starting up,)

She must not, shall not die, till she forgives me—

Speak—speak to me—(*kneeling to the corse*)

(*Turning to the Monks*)—Yes—she will speak anon—

(*A long pause, he drops the corse.*)

She speaks no more—Why do ye gaze on me—

I loved her, yea, I love, in death I loved her—

I killed her—but—I loved her—

What arm shall loose the grasp of love and death?

(*The Knight and Monks surround, and attempt to tear him from the body, he snatches a sword from one of the Knights, who retreats in terror, as it is pointed towards him, Bertram resuming all his former previous sternness, bursts into a disdainful laugh.*)

Ber. Thee—against thee—oh, thou art safe—thou worm——

Bertram hath but a single foe on earth—

And *he is here*——(*stabs himself.*)

Prior. (*rushes forward.*) He dies, he dies.

Ber. (*struggling with the agonies of death.*)

I know thee holy Prior—I know ye, brethern

Lift up your holy hands in charity.

(*With a burst of wild exultation.*)

I died no felon death—

A warrior's weapon freed a warrior's soul—

THE END

EPILOGUE.

Written by the Honourable George Lamb.

SPOKEN BY MISS KELLY.

Say, for our Author whose proud hopes aspire,
To sound the Tragic Bard's neglected lyre.
Say, for our novice who at once the weight,
Bears of her own and of the Poet's fate.
Oh say, what hope? 'Tis mine with doubt and fear
In this dread hour to ask your judgment here ;
Yet, for my sake, before your sentence, stay,
And hear me draw one moral from the play.

Enough for IMAGINE the tears ye gave her ;
I come to say one word in BERTRAM's favour.
BERTRAM ! ye cry, a ruthless blood-stain'd rover !!
He was——but also was the truest lover :
And, faith ! like cases that we daily view,
All might have prosper'd, had the fair been true.

Man, while he loves, is never quite deprav'd,
And woman's triumph, is a lover sav'd.
The branded wretch, whose callous feelings court
Crime for his glory and disgrace for sport ;
If in his breast love claims the smallest part,
If still he values one fond female heart,
From that one seed, that ling'ring spark may grow
Pride's noblest flow'r, and virtue's purest glow :
Let but that heart—dear female lead with care
To honour's path and cheer his progress there ;
And proud, though haply, sad regret occurs
At all his guilt, think all his virtue hers.

The fair not always view with fav'ring eyes
The very virtuous or extremely wise ;
But, odd it seems, will sometimes rather take
Want with the spendthrift, riot with the rake.
“ None, howe'er vitious, find all women froward,
“ None—did I say?—none, save the sot and coward.”
The reason's plain, the good need nought to warm them,
And we must love the wicked to reform them.

" Yet we some wives, some sweethearts may discover,
 " Almost no better than the spouse or lover ;
 " Nought can to peace the busy female charm,
 " And if she can't do good, she must do harm—
 " Can chill warm youth, yet fails to warm chill age,
 " Makes sages fools, but merely makes fools sage ;
 " Some women, like all men, have tastes for evil,
 " And where they should be angels, play the devil.

Still woman draws new power, new empire still
 From every blessing and from every ill.
 Vice on her bosom lulls remorseful care,
 And virtue hopes congenial virtue there.
 Still she most hides the strength that most subdues,
 To gain each evil its opposite pursues,
 Lures by neglect, advances by delay,
 And gains command by swearing to obey !

Women have pow'r too in these gallant days,
 (So Authors think) of recommending plays.
 The prologue proves, ere the play is known,
 Rugged and dull as the male speaker's tone ;
 When the scene's done, and many a fault provokes you,
 Women and Epilogue come forth to coax you.
 Yet dare I plead, who in this wond'rous age,
 Can only speak and walk upon the stage,
 Who know nor caste, nor tierce, nor fencing odds,
 Nor by a wife's assistance seek the Gods.
 Yes, I will dare ; for if ye're pleased to-night,
 The genuine drama re-asserts its right.

BERTRAM in crime elate, of murder proud,
 Ruthless to man, to woman's accents bow'd ;
 Be mov'd like him, your sterner thoughts resign
 At woman's voice, and let that voice be mine.

Lines between the " inverted commas" are omitted in speaking.

FREDOLFO;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

THE REV. C. R. MATURIN,

AUTHOR OF *BERTRAM*, &c. &c.

LONDON:

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DEDICATION.

TO HIS GRACE

THE DUKE OF LEINSTER.

MY LORD,

I HAVE solicited your Grace's permission to dedicate this Tragedy to you, not merely on account of your exalted rank—though that is the highest in your native country; not merely on account of your condescension to literary men—though that has induced you to notice efforts even humble as mine; but, because to the scattered nobility of a deserted Country, *you* set the *rare* and illustrious example of a resident Irish Nobleman.

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Grace's very humble

and obedient Servant,

CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SWISS.

FREDOLFO	Mr. YOUNG.
ADELMAR	Mr. C. KEMBLE.
BERTHOLD.....	Mr. YATES.
WALDO.....	Mr. CONNOR.
PAGE	Mr. PARSLÖE.
MINSTREL.....	Mr. COMER.
PRIOR	Mr. CHAPMAN.
MONK	Mr. THORNTON.

URILDA Miss O'NEILL.

AUSTRIANS.

WALLENBERG.....	Mr. MACREADY.
ULRIC.....	Mr. WHITE.

Attendants, Soldiers, &c.

*Time—the Fourteenth Century.—Scene—the Residence
of Fredolfo, on Mount St. Gothard, and at Altdorf
in the neighbourhood.*

over a matter of fact
K. for some time
I have been in the family
have I not had such a chance
of being in the family
of the family
of the family

PROLOGUE.



Who has not heard of that romantic clime,
Where, throned in wildness, Nature reigns sublime;
Where the young peasant, 'mid creation's shock,
Slumbers in peace upon his cradle rock;
And as the lightnings flash and thunders roll,
To danger educates his ardent soul;
Till the full spirit, now in years mature,—
As its own mountain-torrent grand and pure—
Worships the spot where despotism fell,
And fate and freedom wing'd the shaft of Tell!
Britons! o'er such a scene the Muse to-night
Rises rejoicing on her plumes of light,
Proudly assured to every bosom here
The soil of liberty is doubly dear!
Yet is not war her sanguinary theme—
The statesman's madness, or the warrior's dream!
The sad vicissitudes of mortal weal,
The pangs that all have felt, or yet may feel—
A daughter's anguish, and a father's fall—
Such is our theme to-night:—of Nature's call
What human breast, till life's last awful hour,
Denies the echo or disowns the power?—
Not for his theme, but Muse, the stranger fears,
Nor dreams of plaudits, so he win but tears!

FREDOLFO.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A Gothic Hall in the Castle of Fredolfo ; Waldo and a Minstrel seated at a table, with wine. The Minstrel touching a chord on his harp, as the curtain draws up, as if he had just concluded an air. Night : storm heard without. Waldo starts up.

Wal. HUSH!—hark!—

The warder on the tower hath blown his blast.—
It is my lord—where are those loitering knaves?

Enter Page, with a torch.

How now, Sir boy, ye keep brave order here!—
Did ye not hear the summoning blast that sent
Its deep low tremblings on the hollow wind?

Page. I stood upon the warder's tower, and
listen'd ;—

There was no voice, nor lip of man to breathe
it.

“ *Minstrel.* It was the wind, or else the hooting owl,

“ Or some wild sound of the many voiced mountain,

“ Such as men oft in mountain regions hear.

“ Sit down, that I may touch my harp again.

“ *Wal.* Peace, peace, I pray thee ; peace—
how looks the night ?”

Page. It is a fearful and a stormy night ;
Woe to the traveller, who in such an hour
Must scale St. Gothard’s height !

Wal. Away, thou loiterer !
Where is the beacon that should burn so bright ?
Where is the taper in the latticed casement,
Shedding its star-like ray, to guide the traveller ?

Away ! and from the vale should trampling hoof
Or horn be heard, or torch-led litter gleam,
Let all his battlements ring with the blast
That gives Fredolfo welcome ! [*Exit Page.*

(*Pausing as the storm increases.*)

Hush ! the storm—
It gives a thrilling answer to my speech.—
Oh, I do fear some evil from this night !

Min. Why doth he leave at such unwonted hour

His shelter’d home in Altdorf’s pleasant walls,
Giving his hoary age to the wind’s rudeness,—
Which the cloak’d churl would shrink from at
such hour—

And bearing to these wilds his lovely daughter ?

Wal. What boots it thee to know? he hath
his reasons.—

On with thy tale, or song, to speed the mo-
ments!

Min. What, shall I tell thee of a stern old
carle,

Who chid the curious wishes of a minstrel,
All-while he burn'd to tell the tale himself?

Wal. Go to! thou art insolent and curious
too.—

I have no tale—'tis all but doubt and wonder!

“ 'Tis weary watching for the traveller

“ Who journeys in the night, and wearier
still

“ Watching for those who with the tempest
meet

“ The dark and wrestling angel of the night;

“ But, oh! 'tis sad to watch the lamp for him

“ Who seeks his home as men explore a char-
nel—

“ A place of foul and festering recollections;—

“ Whose walls a viewless hand hath traced with
writing, —

“ Whose floors have daggers for the foot that
treads them.

“ *Min.* What dost thou mean by these mys-
terious words?”

Wal. Ten years have pass'd, since Lord Fre-
dolfo journey'd

To meet the Syndics in the halls of Altdorf.—

He was the country's idol — Switzerland,

Through all her rescued cantons, bless'd her
champion ;

For, when he sat in council, from his head
Sprang Liberty, a living goddess arm'd !
Nor lack'd his hand the thunder to defend
her. —

So he went forth — the people blessing him ; —
His wife and infant daughter here remain'd, —
He kiss'd them on the morn of his departure,
But not on his return : — Hark ! — Hark ! —
what noise ?

[*Minstrel rises. — Through the casement is seen
a display of the effects of a storm, in a moun-
tainous country.*

“ *Min.* The storm in his dark might hath
gone abroad

“ Among the mountains ; — all their echoes an-
swer

“ The giant anthem of a thousand caverns

“ That day hath never look'd on : —

“ There is a blackness in the hurtling air,

“ As light had never been : —

“ Woe to the traveller in a night like this ! ”

Wal. It was a night like this, of woe and fear,
(The stormy twilight of a winter's eve,)
Fredolfo to these towers return'd in hope. —
His child, alone, to meet her father ran —
No mother led her there : — he flung her off,
He called her mother's name, and echo mock'd
him ; —

The silence of the menials answer'd him, —

They knew not her dark fate, nor aught could tell him.

Min. Where was his wife?

Wal. Who knew? who knows even now?

She was no more, yet no one mark'd her end :—
Her veil and zone, flung on a fearful rock,
Through whose worn arch the mountain-torrent struggled,

Were all her fate's memorial.

Min. Merciful heaven!

Was there no trace, no answering event?

Wal. Yes, there was one; on that same fearful night

The Austrian governor, stern Wallenberg,
Lay on yon rocks a stark and weltering corse.—
It was a horrid sight to see him borne
Within these walls, stretch'd out upon this pavement;
His unclosed eyes, clench'd hands, and bared teeth,
Fix'd in the strength of the last horrible agony,
Show'd he had struggled felly with the hands
That dealt with him.

“ — Why dost thou gaze upon me?

“ *Min.* I know not why I gaze—on with thy tale.

“ *Wal.* There is a dizzy trembling in my brain,

“ Whene'er I see that vision — that lost wife —
“ And then that Austrian tyrant” — Through the cantons,

Still sounds the cry, "Who will reveal the murderer?"

His tyrant son still urges the reward —

In vain; the grave its secret darkly kept,

And from that hour these walls a master knew
not.

Why now he seeks them, ask me not to tell.

Enter Page, hastily.

Page. There is a voice of terror from the
vale,

Neighing of startled steeds, and shouts of horse-
men;

And feebly mingling with the deep-toned blast,
I heard a female's cries.

Wal. It is the daughter of Fredolfo! Haste,
Away! bear torches, throw the portal wide: —

[Exit Page.]

Full strait and perilous is the path by day,
Which that lorn lady must in darkness tread.

[A confused noise without.]

Enter Berthold.

Ha! Berthold — her attendant! — Where's thy
lady?

Bert. Curse on the tremblings of this pithless
arm,

That vainly struggled with her frightened steed,
While to the flood he bore his screaming bur-
den!

Wal. His screaming burden? Heavens! she
perishes! —

Coward! thou saw'st her danger, and thou
fled'st!

Thou thing of weakness and deformity,
'Twas thy ill-omen'd visage scared her palfrey!
Would I could tarry longer here to curse thee!

[Rushes out with the rest.]

Bert. Coward, deform'd, and spurn'd! —
Can I not stab him? —

Why, when my fingers would enwring his throat,
Does my bedew'd and quivering flesh recoil? —
All loathsome things are things of danger too —
Even the small spider hath his drop of poison,
As deadly as the vast and volumed serpent's. —
I — I, alone, must writhe in impotence,

Gasp with unutter'd curses, and crush darkly
The abortive births of mischief in their throes.

*[Confused sound of voices without — Vassals enter
with torches, and Waldo, bearing Urilda in
his arms, in a swoon.]*

Vassals. She lives! she's saved! — A stran-
ger's arm hath saved her!

Bert. (snatching her from Waldo) Stand back!
— 'twas to my care her father gave her.
Fellow, stand back! no arm but mine shall
clasp her.

(Pausing over her.)

Oh! it renews the heart to gaze on thee!
Thou thing of power, that hast not life, but
givest it: —

Thou beauteous even in death — making death
 beauteous !

Those softly closed lids, in whose rich veil
The unseen light dwells lovely,—the wan cheek,
Amid whose pallid bower death weds with
 beauty ;

The faintly-falling arms, the woe-bent head —
Oh ! still be thus ! Oh, yes, be ever thus ! — .
While thus I see thee calm, I deem thee kind.
Those eyes will ope — to turn their light from
 me ;

Those arms will wave, to chide me with their
 softness ;

And, oh ! that lip, — that rubied cup of bliss,
That flows with joy for all, pour hate on me !

Wal. (incensed) Audacious ! — to the daugh-
 ter of thy lord ! —

*[Urilda recovering, and starting from the arms
 of Berthold, whom she views with horror.]*

Uril. Ha ! saved by thee ! — impossible ! —
 where was I ?

There was an arm — it was not thine, that saved
 me.

Wal. No, lady, no ; he fled — the coward
 fled !

Thy scatter'd train, storm-struck, aghast, and
 trembling,

Consign'd thee to his care, who cared for nought
But the vile freight of his most worthless carcase,
Whose fragments even the rending rocks had
 scorn'd.

Uril. (starting at the sound)

Amid the rocks!—Ay! there, 'twas there he
found me!

The horrid avalanche came thundering down—
Angel of wrath—most horrible in whiteness;
Pale desolation's ghastly smile,—that smile
More fearful than its frown—I saw, and fled,—
And when o'er the wild chasm my courser
paused,

Where the rent pine had flung a fearful arch,
I knew that I was there, but knew not how!—
A dizzy whirl of nothingness and horror—
My brain is giddy!—mine own shrieks are there!
The chasm yawns black beneath me—that black
chasm!

And then, a mist of fire—and then an arm—
Cries were my breath!—I shriek'd, even though
it saved me.

Wal. Shame on yon craven's flight! It was a
stranger,

A youth unknown, nor mingled with your train;
When even the boldest rein'd their steeds in
horror,

With desperate steps he scaled that bridge of
death,

With desperate arm he snatch'd thee from its
verge;

Nor paused his foot, nor fail'd his nervous grasp,
Till safe he placed thee in thy vassals' arms.

Uril. Speak,—my deliverer! wherefore comes
he not?

Will he not hear me bless him? Doth he scorn
Thanks from the lip, whose life his gift hath
been?

Why are ye silent? (*gazing round her.*)

Wal. Strange was his demeanor;
His cheek glow'd freshly; and, as on he bore you,
We well could mark his high heroic form;
But, when his eye upon the sculptured walls
That fence your towers, had caught Fredolfo's
name,

From his lax arms their senseless burthen
dropp'd,

And stern he parted, shunning further question.

Uril. Is this a dream? I am Fredolfo's
daughter—

And does a son of Switzerland think scorn
To save the child of him who saved his country?
Does not the heart that hears his name ex-
pand

Like palace-gates to greet some glorious
guest?—

Away, and seek him!

[*Exeunt Waldo and vassals.*

(*Turning, and starting at seeing herself alone
with Berthold.*)

Ha! thou lingering there!

Art thou there still, and I alone with thee?

Oh! seek him too!

Bert. Seek him? the happy youth,
Who press'd that form to his high-heaving
side, —

Who saw thy smile of death in silence bless
him!

Seek *him*! — No; — bid me wrestle with the
storm,

When on the ice-rock the quench'd lightning
hisses; —

Bid me with forceless grasp seize thy steed's
rein —

Feel thee rent from me — feel another save
thee —

While o'er my trampled form thy pages trod,
And, passing, laugh'd at the loath'd lump they
spurn'd;

Scorn'd, strengthless, beautyless — all, all but
loveless! —

Bid me do aught but leave thee in thy scorn —

Bid me do aught but seek that happy youth!

Uril. (with horror) Ah, wretch! thou didst
not save me — hence! begone!

My quivering flesh recoils when thou art near.

Why do I shudder at thee? what art thou,

Slave of my father, to Fredolfo's daughter?

Darest thou to breathe thy mad and horrid
passion? —

What, though my sire, in all but that most wise,

Makes pastime of thy doating loathsomeness,

What, though he chides me when I shrink from
thee —

Bert. Shrink from me — Ha! ha! ha!

Uril. Forbear! forbear!

Thy laugh is even more hideous than thy form!

Ah! curse me rather! from those leprous lips
Curses would sound like blessings!

Bert. (with bitter irony) Bless thee, then.
Now wilt thou hear me, lady?

Uril. Bless thy foes,
Not me, not me — thou thing of hideous form!
I loathe — I tremble at — I pity thee!

Bert. (approaching her, while she shrinks)
Loathe me, and tremble too — but, dare not
pity.

Wouldst thou a subject meet for pity know,—
A theme to melt thy gleaming eye of beauty
Like evening's quench'd star, shining through
its dews —

Pity — thy father! [*Exit Berthold.*]

Uril. Ha! what meant the slave?
There was a glare from his abhorred eye,—
A livid light, like that the thunder-cloud
Sheds o'er the pale and stilled earth beneath,
Before it bursts and blasts it!
Faintness and terror are upon me — O,
For the brave arm that saved me, to sustain me!

[*She totters, through weakness.*]
*(Adelmar enters, attended by Waldo, whom he
waves off, and advances slowly alone.)*

(Gazing with doubt and amazement)

He comes! oh, God! it cannot, cannot be! —
And does he dare amid these walls to seek me?
For me he trembled — for himself he fears not.

(*Rushing up to him.*)

Away! away! thou must not enter here!

There is a voice from out these walls forbids
thee! —

My father hates thee, tracks thy hunted steps —
(*Relaxing from fear into tenderness, and falling
into his arms.*)

Adelmar, art thou here? — and was it thou?

Adel. Yes; Adelmar, the unowned, the wanderer,

The stranger — almost to himself unknown;
He, o'er whom midnight murder darkly watches,
He, who on unseen daggers plants his steps,
And tramples them to clasp thee: — Yes, I follow'd thee

O'er the dark mountains — through the night I follow'd; —

The spirits of the tempest raised their arms
To snatch thee, and I grappled with their
might, —

Wrestled with them in darkness, and o'ercame
them.

Bright star, emerging sole on my fate's blackness,

Shed thy last light on me! (*kneeling*) 'twill be
the last!

Uril. (*after a pause of agony*) It will — it must! — Why does my father hate thee?
Away! — amid these hostile walls there is not
Safety for thee — though thou hast saved their
daughter.

Adel. Hate me! — I could to my forgiving
breast

Clasp — yea, weep o'er the man that hated me!
But, oh! thy father spurn'd me; when my
glaive

Had smote the proudest helm that Altdorf
boasts,

When this young arm from practised chiefs in
tourney

Had rent its pledge, to lay it at thy feet—

Thou, thou Urilda, on my glowing brow

Would'st then have placed the wreath my toils
had won.—

I saw thine eye's young gleam, and felt the
lance

Was easier baffled than its wound of light;

I saw thy cheek of rose, and felt the frown

Of death-arm'd brows less awful than thy blush!

I saw the trembling of thy hand of snow,

And felt the grappling of an armed gauntlet

Was pastime to that touch which made me
tremble!

Then, then — thy father ———

*Uril. (rushing to him, and placing her hand
on his lips.)* Hush! he is my father!

Adel. (throwing her off) He spurn'd me, tore
thee from me, bade thy hand

Bind round thy meanest groom the blushing
wreath,

Sooner than on that conqueror's brow — He
spurn'd me!

Uril. (weeping) Had he spurn'd me, I must
have loved him still —

But thou, to whom his daughter's tears are
triumphs,

If that her agony no pity moves, —

Though thou dost outrage nature, honour, vir-
tue ; —

Revere the name his country's sons revere, —

Fredolfo's name ! (*in a tone of command.*)

Adel. (solemnly.) I am the child of woe,

Of persecution, and of mystery ;

Fredolfo's name — the name his country wor-
ships —

Rung in my infant dreams. — I was a boy,

Wild and imaginative, full of thoughts

That mountain-spirits to their children whisper,

I might have been a hero !

Uril. Might have been ! Thou art !

Adel. I should have been, but for thy father !

A peasant child, amid the mountain steeps,

St. Gothard's heights I wander'd — the storm's
shrieks

I heard, and echoed in wild fearless mirth,

Like children, who in awful ignorance sport ; —

There came another shriek, — a shriek of mur-
der !

[*Urilda shudders.*]

Uril. (Starting and agitated.) Murder ! but,

then, my father was not there, —

Or was there — but to save ?

Adel. I will not speak —

Dark thoughts come thronging with that night's
remembrance.

Twice, twice, with horrible strength the voice
shrieked murder!

I flew in madness there.—Amid the night
Darkly I grappled with two shadowy forms,
Beneath whose gripe a struggling warrior heaved,
Then lay a corse. — I had no arms. —

Uri. No arms?

Could'st thou not kneel to them, and weep, and
pray?

I would, had I been there; I would have clasp'd
That dying man in my young pleading arms,
And held them up for weapons of defence!
Oh! that I had been there—he had not perish'd!

Adel. They stabb'd me — On my breast the
scar remains!

I knelt in blood beside the corse all night,
My living blood with the pale corse's min-
gling:—

Uri. Oh! that my father had beheld thee
then!

So young, so brave, so piteous, —as a child
He must have loved thee.

Adel. Hath he loved me since?

Time pass'd as in a dream, and oft I thought
That the dead warrior in his mountain grave
Slept unremember'd — then, by ruffian hands
Dragg'd from my hut, all tremblingly, I fol-
low'd —

Far in a sea-toss'd bark the ruffians bore me;—
A voice was in the wind, that swell'd the sails,—

That charm'd them ne'er to let their freight
return !

Uril. A voice ! — what voice ?

Adel. I know not ; — but I cried,
Who tears a freeman from his mountain-
home ?

Who rends the child his country cannot spare
From her spread arms ? The answer was, —
Fredolfo !

Uril. (Shrieking with amazement.) Impossible !

Adel. I cried, 'impossible.'

Years, mournful years, in a strange land were
wasted, —

Wasted to me — the land was beautiful —
Fair rose the spires, and gay the buildings were,
And rich the plains, like dreams of blessed isles ;
But, when I heard my country's music breathe,
I sigh'd to be among her wilds again !

I climb'd a bark's tall side — an arm grasp'd
mine —

Struggling, I turn'd, and ask'd who dared with-
hold me ?

A dark-eyed ruffian answer'd, — 'twas Fredolfo !

Uril. (Bursting into vehemence.)

It was a villain, liar, fiend, that mock'd thee ! —
My father rend a child of Switzerland
From the dear mountains mountain-children
love ?

My father snatch thee from the bark, that bore
Thy steps to seek the bosom of thy home !

Away ! — in absence, I may try to hate thee.

Adel. (Kneeling.) Oh! spurn me, curse me;
but thou shalt not hate me!

“ O’er my wild life of mystery and woe,

“ A darkly gather’d cloud, one fair beam
broke!

“ O, close not up its light,—it is thine image!

“ Still let it tremble o’er my stormy fate,

“ Calming the wave it lights with short bright
lustre.”

A wanderer,—banish’d, outlaw’d by thy father,
Let me upon the desert shores of life
Pause, to unlock the casket of my soul,
And gaze upon thy bright and treasured smile,
The only gem this lonely heart can boast of:—
Smile on my parting steps, and I am blest,
Though they to ruin tread!

Urik. [softened] O! not to ruin!

In other lands thy valour shall be known;
In other lands some happier beauty bless thee.
Wilt thou, when brighter roses bloom around
thee,

Think of the bud that wither’d in its wilds?

Wilt thou, where balmier lips their nectar
shed,

Think still of parting passion’s last cold kiss?

[Sinks into his arms.]

*(Confused noise within, and servants rush across
the stage with torches.)*

*Starting from the arms of Adelmarr, and address-
ing the servants who hurry past her.*

Where dost thou rush in this wild speed of fear?

1st Serv. Our lord!—our lord! the storm! he
perishes!—

He meets the might of the dark hour alone!—
His frightened train have left him in the vale.

[*Exeunt Servants.*]

*Urilda grasps Waldo, who is rushing out with
the rest, and detains him.*

Uril. Speak! tell, where art thou rushing?

Wal. Askest thou where,

Hearing the wrath of this most awful night?

To save my lord, thy father! Know'st thou
not,

St. Gothard's monks, upon their ice-crown'd
towers,

Prepare to sound that sole and terrible bell,

That tells the traveller's danger?

Uril. 'Traveller's danger!'

It is my father's—speak'st thou so of him?

And stand I here, and with a daughter's heart,

To list the bell that tolls my father's fate?

[*To Adelmar*] Away, and save him, or I am
not saved!

Adel. [*Clasping her to his heart*] Yes, thou
art saved.

Uril. [*Starting from him.*] Saved, while my
father perishes?

The bells of St. Gothard's Monastery peal out—

*The storm increases, and lightning flashes
through the casements.*

Uril. Hark! hark! it strikes upon my brain!

[*Adelmar kneels to her.*]

Away! thou mock'st me with false homage!
hence!

I spurn the life thou gavest—my father perishes!

[*Bell tolls again.*]

Answer not me—

Thine arm is strong—Oh! save him! [*kneeling.*

Adel. [*Pausing.*] One word—one look,
Urilda!

Uril. Yes, this word,—

This look—an agonizing daughter's look,—

Whose eye hath speech, though her voice
faileth—thus—

[*Falls at his feet.*

Adel. I fly to save the life, that lives to blast
me!

[*Exit Adelmar.*

(*The storm increases.*)

Uril. (*Clinging to Waldo.*) “Oh, hold me!
let me grasp thee in my terrors!

“For fearfulness is on me—’tis a night

“Of perils, horrors, and of many deaths!

“I fix mine eye on the dark floor, but there

“The lightnings flash in many a horrid curve;

“I close mine eyes—the lightning glares
through them!

“My father! Heaven have mercy on my father!

[*Sinking from Waldo's arms to the ground.*

“*Wal.* Peace, peace, sad lady, peace!

“*Uril.* What tell'st thou me of peace, when
Heaven is warring?

“ (*Kneeling.*) Ye wing’d and viewless couriers
of his march,

“ Whose chariot is the whirlwind,—whose dark
forms

“ Unseen, we hear the rushing of your pi-
nions,

“ I kneel not to you in my heart’s strong ter-
rors —

“ I kneel to Him, whose arm hath power o’er
yours —

“ Hear me! I bend in agony — Oh, hear,

“ Great God of nature! List to nature’s voice!

“ A daughter’s voice! hold back thy hand, nor
dart

“ Thy swift and perilous lightnings on that
head —

“ Spare him! — A world of crime and woe de-
mands thee!

(*The storm increases.*)

“ (*Rises in terror.*) The deep and swelling thun-
ders answer me —

“ Th’ unnatural glare of the lightnings, horrid
noon,

“ Making a sunless day — He perishes!

“ And I—I linger here — his daughter lingers!

[*Rushing out.*

“ *Wal.* (*detaining her.*) Where wouldst thou
rush?

“ *Uril.* (*wildly.*) Where the tempest raves,

“ To bare my bosom to the forked lightnings!

“ To shriek in tones that will appal the thunder!

“ To yell in nature’s ears a daughter’s prayer!

“ *Wal. (Holding her.)* Thou, thou, who trembled at the lightnings’ flash?

“ *Uril. (Bursting from him.)* I was a woman. Now I am a daughter!

“ Why should I fear this battle of the clouds?

“ I could thy bosom pierce to save my father.

[*She rushes out—Waldo following.*]

SCENE II.

The Mountains of St. Gothard, in the neighbourhood of the Castle—A tremendous storm—The scene partially illuminated by flashes of lightning—Fredolfo’s attendants are seen hurrying among the wild passes of the Mountains—A distant view of the Monastery of St. Gothard—The bell pealing at intervals—Two attendants of Fredolfo are seen indistinctly among the Cliffs.

1st *Atten.* Where is thy lord?

2d *Atten.* Nay, ask that fearful bell!

Why didst thou leave him? Hush! nor answer me—

I hear a horn, ’tis breathing from the vale—

In the deep pausings of the storm I hear it—

Hark! Hark!

1st *Atten.* It is a stranger’s horn that sounds—

That stranger-youth, who cross'd us in our
journey!

See! see! he totters o'er that gulf of death —
He plunges in—lost youth, he perishes!

[*Exeunt.*

*A tremendous chasm among the rocks.—Adelmar
is seen extricating Fredolfo, who leans on him
exhausted—Adelmar leads him forward slowly
—The stage very dark.*

Fred. (without looking up.)

What hand hath snatch'd me from my cavern-
tomb?

Is it a mortal arm on which I lean,

Whose power hath burst my bond of adamant?

“The grave had closed upon me—o'er my
head

“The meeting rocks form'd an eternal bar-
rier—

“Nature's stupendous keep—whose shackles
are

“The ribbed rocks—whose vault the hol-
lowed mountain;”—

[*shudders.*

Within a lightless dungeon pent to perish,
Which mortal hand nor framed nor pene-
trates, —

Below the human ear, the human tread —

The baffled eagle scream'd as far he flew —

The tempest's voice, — a fearful whisper there,
It had been bliss to hear it roar in freedom!—

There was a viewless stream beside my foot,

Whose waves no light, whose lapse no echo
knew : —

[*recovering the sense of his situation.*
Speak to me, stranger, — thy brave hand feels
cold !

Tell me whose name I am to bless ?

Adel. Bless heaven !

I am a wretched mortal ! fare thee well !

Thy train approach, I leave thee to their care.

(*Torches at a distance.*)

Fred. (*holding him.*) Thou shalt not leave
me !

Bear torches here, I must behold the man
Who trembles less at peril than at praise.

Adel. (*struggling with him.*)

Hold ! know'st thou not with whom thou darkly
strugglest ?

Release me, let me hide from thee for ever !

(*Fredolfo detains him.*)

Swear then, whatever form the light disclose,
Thou wilt not.—Ha ! the torches glare ! behold
me !

[*The servants enter with torches—Adelmar flings
back his mantle, and gazes on Fredolfo ; after
a moment's pause of recognition, Fredolfo's
countenance assumes the wildest expression of
rage and horror.*

Fred. Ha ! Thou,—thou here ! the dæmon
sworn to blast me !

I rush to hide me 'mid the peopled city, —

He haunts me in the streets! — I fly to the
mountains, —

His hand hath power to reach me in their dark-
ness!

Come, bear me in thy talon'd gripe to torture,
Let us lie down on beds of fire together,
And wallow in fierce ease, — that I may feel
I have no more to fear! *[Sinks down.]*

Wal. What means my lord?

Fred. *(starting up.)* Slaves! seize him! drag
him to your darkest dungeons!

Heap mountains on him, bury him i'the centre,
Where light can never pierce.

Adel. *(struggling with the attendants.)*

Men! hear me plead,

Murder not him, whose arm hath saved your
master!

*[They grapple with him, and get him on his
knees—Fredolfo draws his dagger, and rushes
towards him, when Urilda entering, flings her-
self between them.]*

Uril. Spare him! Oh spare! it is your
daughter kneels.

Fred. Off, frantic wretch! — Know'st thou
for whom thou plead'st?

Uril. *(in agony.)* He saved your life!

Fred. Saved it, — to curse, to blight it!

Off,—or I curse thee too!

Uril. *(Flinging her arms round Adelmar, and
protecting him.)*

Curse me, — but spare him!

Fred. (Writhing on seeing her in his arms.)
Lock'd in his arms before my withering sight!
Then, hear me — Thou hast drawn the thunder
 down,
And may it fall and crush thee! Ye dark
 spirits,
“ Who quit your homes to range with horrid
 joy
“ The deeper hell of man's changed soul within
 him,”
Who prompt the parent's trembling tongue with
 curses,
Who goad the female heart with brandish'd
 scorpions,
Steep mine in your black venom, — from its
 core
Pluck nature's up-torn roots to the last fibre,
Though its strings sever too — while o'er the
 head
Of her, who was my child —
[*Urilda, who has been listening with horror, re-
leases Adelmar, and falls on the earth at his
feet.*
Uril. Oh, mercy! mercy!

[*The curtain falls.*

End of the First Act.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

A Gothic Gallery in the Castle of Fredolfo — Fredolfo and Berthold discovered — Fredolfo seated, and much exhausted — Berthold standing by him, and watching him with malignant delight.

Fred. (after a pause.) Ay, — thus it must be
— this is meet and fitting. —

A woman's shrieks must be as music to me, —
Her agony's clasp I must like trophies sport
with,

Must watch her writhings with an eye of stone,
And bid my slaves, who shudder at their task,
“Untwine that worm, and fling it far from
me.”

It was my child, my fond and lovely child —
My child whom I should love — whom I have
loved —

Whom I do love with all a father's yearnings; —

And her I spurn'd — Right — I shall be in time
A fine accomplish'd villain, rude and ruthless!

[turning to Berthold.]

What scowl'st thou on, with thy portentous
smile,

Passing like lightning, o'er thy stormy visage?
It is some evil, or thou couldst not smile!

Bert. (with bitter irony.)

I mark with awe the patriot's private moments;
These are thy triumphs, Virtue, view, and
boast them! [*suddenly changing.*

Oh! what a fool is the brute multitude,
To shout "a God!" before this hollow image!
Ha! ha! ha! things are well balanced here; —
The evening's groan repays the morning's boast.
Vice were too humble, but for scenes like these,
And hopeless Villainy, lacking such solace,
Would turn an anchorite for very sadness!

Fred. Thou tool of wrath, which, while I
grasp, I shudder,
Though one wild moment's sudden agony
Made me a fiend, I am a man again.—
I would not harm that youth for many worlds;
Go, and release the prisoner.

*Bert. (Drawing his dagger, and pointing to it
with significant gesture.)*

Thus, perchance? —

Fred. (Giving him a key.)

No, villain, thus — bid him be free, and live!
Bid him, if possible, forget — if not,
Let him revenge — I'm weary of the struggle!

Bert. Thou weak of purpose, whom the tool
thou scorn'st
Scorns in its turn, in soul, if not in tongue, —
With keen and breathless speed thy rage hath
chased

This youth from shore to shore — The chase
is o'er, —

He pants i'th' toils, he gasps beneath thy fangs —
And now thou say'st, "Go, set the prisoner
free."

Success in crime makes men half deem it
virtue, —

Thy weak and partial virtue's half a crime! —

[*Seeing Fredolfo moved, he urges him more
strongly.*

'Tis but a blow! he is unarm'd and helpless, —
Even this weak frame might do the work upon
him,

Grasp his white neck with these lean bony fin-
gers, —

Plant this distorted knee upon his breast, —

There, like the night-fiend, sit in grinning
triumph,

And watch the gasp, and drink the death-
choked howl!

Fred. (struck with horror.)

Away! begone! and for thy bitterest penance,
Incarnate devil, do one deed of goodness!

*Bert. (absorbed in malignity, and not heeding
him.)* I could, such is my heart's o'erflowing
spleen

To all that loved, and lovely are — methinks,
I could, even with a look, — as thus — dart
through him

The basilisk's eye-fang — dying on the throe!

Fred. (Incensed beyond patience, and going up to him fiercely, then recollecting himself.)

Slave — but I am thy slave — hence, hence,
I say! —

And move me not to do thee some fell outrage.

Bert. (going reluctantly, then returning with a sneer.) Would'st thou not do the gentle deed
thyself?

Fred. (stamping furiously.) Hence! hence!

[*Exit Berthold.*

(*with much agitation.*)

I am enthrall'd to one, who wreaks on me
A dæmon's mockery, and a dæmon's malice. —

“ Faith, gratitude are gone; gone is the tie
“ That darkly binds the guilty to the guilty —
“ The iron chain they can nor break nor gild;
“ The fearful sympathy of minds unblest
“ Communing in the darkness of their purposes.”
The power to torture is the link that binds
him, —

Faithful, — but not for me — he's sternly faithful
To the fix'd malice of his hellish nature; —
He goads — he lashes me, then checks at will
My tortured speed, to urge the lash again.
Why does he linger thus? — What, if he dare —
I'll go myself, — with my own hands release
him. [*retreating with great horror.*

His memory hath slumber'd from a boy, —
But, quicken'd by his wrongs, it may revive; —
Oh! on the mind of man, by many feelings

And varying interests cross'd, the effaced traces
Of memory shift, as time's wave washes them ;
But childhood, on its single, first impression
Dwells with fond strength, though all its powers
be—pain !

I dare not see him—on my mortal foe
Be my front bent—but not on him I've injured.

*Berthold enters slowly, approaches, and stands
beside him.*

Bert. 'Tis done !

Fred. (starting) What's done ? there is some-
evil done :

Whene'er I hear thy step—I feel a shudder ;
Whene'er I hear thy voice—I fear a crime.

Bert. What thou'dst have done—set free
thine enemy,
To tell his tale of horror through the world.
Like a slipp'd beagle from the leash he sprung,
To bay with deep-mouth'd yell thy infamy,
'Till the roused welkin answer him again,
And all the hunter's spears are turn'd on thee.

Fred. (after a long pause) He knows it not—
'Twas night—He was a child—*(a pause.)*
“ Years, years have pass'd—the thought could
haunt me only

“ In the dark wilds of guilt, where all is fear.”

Bert. If 'tis unknown, what shakes Fredolfo's
soul ?

Fred. (with a burst of agony)
I know it—I—Fredolfo knows it all !

Assembled worlds are dumb when conscience
speaks ;

The thunder sleeps, the lightning's glance is
mark'd not ;—

The single criminal, the silent judge,
Are all creation's infinite range contains.

There needs no mortal witness in that court,

“ No eye that watches, and no tongue that
speaks ;

“ To him that writhes in guilt's fine sense of
torment

“ The breeze, the dew, the fugitive clouds of
heaven,

“ Memorials traced with pen of iron bear ;

“ All earth is conscious, and all air is voice,

“ Quick with one feeling, vocal with one sound.”

His look of innocence is hateful to me.

What must I feel, then, when I gaze on thee?

Thou dream of fear embodied—guilt's fell
haunter—

Thou night-mare of the oppressed sight, on
whom

Deformity ran wanton!—Yes, she snatch'd

The page where Nature would have written
man,

And madly scrawl'd it with a pictured devil!

The view of Adelmarr recalls my crime—

The sight of thee inflicts my punishment!

Bert. If that my presence be so odious to
thee,

Give me a gift of price, and let me part.

Fred. Thou know'st my fallen state — but
thou'lt rejoice, (*he pauses.*)

To save my child from Wallenberg's fell love
I have resign'd mine office in the state,
Hiding my head beneath this roof of horrors.
No hoarded gold, no gem of price is mine—
Yet, take the ancient jewels of mine house,
Clasp from my robe, and signet from my hand,
So thou wilt part !

Bert. I covet not thy gold — thou hast a
daughter !

Fred. (*waking, as from a dream, and going up
to him*) I did not hear thee, sure !

Bert. (*viewing him calmly*)
Thou hast a daughter !
The maiden is right scornful—but she's du-
teous ;

Her smiles will follow where her father points.

Fred. (*rushing at him furiously*)
Slave—damned wretch, and slave !

Bert. (*repelling him fiercely*)
Patience, proud lord !
Not one step farther, or thou'lt wake a fiend—
Mine arm is pithless, but my will is strong !

(*Fredolfo stands gasping.*)
Thou slave, who fear'st thy slave, thou wretch,
more wretched

Than him thy pride would spurn, and spurning,
rouse,
Stand where thou art, and stand without a
murmur,

Bent brow, or writhen lip, or eye that curses,
Or with a word, I strike thee—worse than dead!

(Pointing to him bitterly.)

Is that the patriot—hero—god—Fredolfo?
Methinks he waxeth pale—the idol nods—
He totters on his pedestal—he falls!
Ha, ha, ha!—falls at his vassal's feet!

Fred. (sinking on his knees with terrible agitation) Shriek through the public streets, I am a
murderer:

Seize on my throat, and drag me forth to justice—

But do not—no—thou dar'st not think of her!

Bert. I dare not! O, thou know'st not what
I dare.

What dares not he whom nature's self hath
cursed,

And who retorts her curse upon her minions;
Blasts beauty, scoffs at truth, makes mock at
agony,

And laughs and tramples 'mid the wreck he
wrought?

Fred. Torture me—trample on me—spare my
child!—

Thou must have pity on a father's agony,
Albeit no child hath ever called thee father;
Revel, thou fiend, in my lost paradise,
But spare the flower I loved before I fell!

Bert. (significantly, and going) You trust me
with your life, but not your daughter.

Fred. (in terror) My life! my life!—

Bert. (with sternness) Fredolfo, come to judgment!

The summoner's voice hath call'd—the judges tremble—

Who is the murderer?

Fred. (seizing him furiously)

Villain, here he stands;—

He grasps thy throat!

Bert. (struggling) Another murder! well—

Fred. (shuddering) Murder!—no, wretch, vile as thou art, the dungeon—

Struggle not—shriek not—(*drawing him off.*)

Bert. Help, ho! help for life! [*They struggle. (A horn sounds without, then a burst of martial music.)*]

Fred. Whence was that blast?

Waldo and attendants enter in haste.

Wal. My lord, my lord! the governor Wallenberg,

All by an arm'd and gallant train attended,
Stands at the castle-gate.

Fred. (with great terror) Count Wallenberg!
What means this visit? Wallenberg!—admit him! (*much agitation.*)

Why gaze ye on me thus? Begone! admit him!

[*Exeunt Waldo and attendants.*]

He must not see me thus!—Oh! shame, and horror!

Let me wipe off the death-damps from my brow—

(Turning to Berthold.)

Villain! remember, if again—No more!

Enter Wallenberg, attended by a splendid train, his air haughty and contemptuous. Through the whole of the scene Fredolfo resumes and retains his dignity. Berthold, when Fredolfo turns from him, follows him with a look of diabolical malignity.

Wall. Hail to Fredolfo! With a friend's free boldness

We press upon his midnight solitude
To claim a welcome.

Fred. (very coldly) Sir, you honour me;
'Tis honour all unmeet for this poor roof,
To house such lordly guest as Wallenberg.

Wall. (with irony)
Lightly I hold such heartless festalry;
Give me a courtly, friendly host like thee;
The long and eager clasp of outstretch'd hands;
(A pause—keener irony.)

Such welcome as Fredolfo's greeting gives;
Such smile as hovers on Fredolfo's lips!

(Exulting in Fredolfo's emotion.)
Give me thy hand—in faith I love thee much!

Fred. Not from unbidden guest can I withhold it.

There, sir!

[Gives his hand, with reluctant dignity.]

Wall. (looking round him)
In sooth, my lord Fredolfo,

Your fancy boasts a nice and curious taste,
To fly the ample, cheerful domes of Altdorf,
And on St. Gothard's wild and naked peak
To battle with the eagle for his eyry,
And wrest your rude meal from the famish'd
wolf!

(Looking round him with increasing scorn.)

A mansion rear'd to spite the elements,
To struggle with the storm for doubtful safety,
And hold its trembling tenure from the blast.

Fred. It hath a charm the stranger knoweth
not:—

It is the dwelling of mine ancestry;
There is an inspiration in its shade;
The echoes of its vaults are eloquent,—
They speak of the glorious dead!
Its tenants are not human—they are more!
The stones have voices, and the walls do
live:—

It is the house of memories, dearly honour'd
By many a trace of long departed glory;
Honour'd by dead and living—honour'd most

(with dignified contempt)

By Wallenberg's light scorn, and scorned light-
ness!

Wall. Nay, nay, be not thus moody, aged
lord—

In faith, I scorn to chafe plebeian pride.—
Ay, struggle as thou wilt through storm and
darkness,
Feed, worm-like, on thy legendary parchments,

Watch cobwebs grow, and cherish the pale mildew—

But thou hast a fair daughter—

Fred. (after a struggle) Sir!—proceed.

Wall. And must that lovely lady linger here,
Shedding her pined beauties on the waste,
Like flower, that in the dark vale dies for woe,
At seeing not the sun? It must not be!
I'll lead her to the city's gay resort,
Where noble knights and courtly ladies be,
And high-plumed gallants in their bravery!
And gems, and torches bright, and ladies' eyes,
Shed luxury of light, and teach cold maids
Mildly to listen to the tale of love.

Fred. (struggling with emotion, then calm)
Count Wallenberg!—this roof is your protection.

Wall. I read the language of that flashing eye,
And could defy it—But, by Heaven you wrong me!

I gazed upon the maid with lawless love;
But my loose days of dalliance are gone by.
Fredolfo, hear me!—Friend, or foe, I reckon not—

Spite of the pride that burns upon my cheek,
Spite of the blood, whose cold recoiling drops
Refuse to flow ere they would mix with thine;
Spite of our nations, natures, hearts averse,
Of all that makes me shudder while I sue,—
I claim thy daughter's hand!

Fred. My daughter's hand!

Ho! call my daughter hither—Wallenberg,
I answer not—herself shall answer thee!

[*Looking off the stage.*

My daughter waits you, count, and speed your
wooing! [Retires.

Wall. (watching her approach)

She comes with all that shrinking bashfulness,
The eloquence of motion,—mute, but felt.
The air around her breathes of purity;
And, as she moves, her equal tread's fine im-
pulse

Falls on the ear like harmony;—the light
That gleams on her fair locks and slender form
Crowns them with hallowed glory, like some
vision

To saintly eyes reveal'd!—She is a thing
To knee and worship. Beauty hath no lustre,
Save when it gleameth through the crystal web
That Purity's fine fingers weave for it;
And then it shows like Venus from the wave,
The fresh drops clinging to her beauty still!

Urilda enters.

Lady, your fair hand!—suffer me to press
Love's true kiss on it—paying with glad lips
The debt that lovers to their ladies owe.

Uril. (very coldly)

My lord, your presence in my father's halls
Warrants a gentle maiden's courtesy;
As such, I pray, accept this meet obeisance.

Wall. I am not wont to woo in suppliant strain,
Nor form'd to languish at a lady's feet,
In such sad guise as smooth-cheek'd striplings
use ;

I woo thee like a man:—I love thee, lady!
Start not, nor tremble ;
Thou, only, could'st subdue a soul like mine—
A soul that, even in softness, half regrets
Its former liberty, and scorns its weakness :
My vanquish'd pride's a victim to my heart,—
The proud reluctant slave is worth the conqueror.

Uril. My lord, perchance a harder task remains,
To conquer mine — My father, speak for me!
[Turning away.]

Fred. (Coldly.) Urilda, speak thyself—thy
father's presence
Gives thee protection, but suspends control.
Banish the tremblings of thy maiden coyness,
Answer, my child, this noble, courteous wooer.

Uril. (Advancing.) Then, thus:—Around my
shrunk and faded form
Wrap the dim veil that mortal touch withdraws
not ; —
“ Fold me in the pale votarist's vestal's stole,—
“ Ay,—in the mendicant's foul weeds of
wretchedness ; —
“ Ay,—in the earthy and worm-dropping
shroud ; ” —

Before ye deck me in the bridal robe,
And place my wedded hand in Wallenberg's.

[*Falls into her father's arms.*]

Wall. Am I awake! — and does a rustic girl,
The low-descended daughter of scorn'd peasants

With blood no richer than the mountain stream,
Spurn the proud hand outstretch'd to raise her?
Thou toy, whom in mine hour of fond insanity
Madly I prized, I fling thy lightness from me,
As the heal'd maniac, glancing round his cell,
Scoffs at the straw his dream of frenzy gilded! —
Oh! that I could from my dishonour'd life
Pluck this foul night of shame! Mark me, proud
girl!

Thy folly's penance shall o'erpay thy lover's. —
I loathe the hour of weakness when I knelt;
But thou shalt curse the hour I knelt in vain!

Fred. (*Incensed.*) Count Wallenberg! —

Uril. My father — Oh, my father!

I had not thought to speak, but this proud insult

Unchains the maiden shame that binds my
tongue.

I *am* a mountain-girl, in whose free veins
Rolls the rich blood of heroes! Men, who,
scorning

To rule their country, only sought to bless it!
The spirits of the great are strong within me,
They prompt me now, — they urge my trembling
tongue

To tell thee, that this weak and female hand,
Ere it clasp one red with my country's blood,
Would clutch with eager hold Death's bony
fingers ;

And this proud heart, big with its country's
feeling,

Would burst this cincture, ere its throbbings
press'd

Against a bosom swelling with fell purposes. —

My father's foe, — my country's, — and my
God's !

No, Wallenberg ! — no, Austrian ! — never ! —
never ! —

“ Seek thou thy mate amid proud Austria's
dames,

“ The daughter of the mountains spurns thy
hand.”

[*Sinks into her father's arms.*

Fred. Thou art my daughter — never loved
as now —

Thou mountain-maid, — thou child of liberty !

Urilda ! Well from Uri's height I named thee,

Free as its breezes, — purer than its snows ! —

[*A pause.*

Count Wallenberg, you have my daughter's an-
swer.

Wall. (Furiously.) Away ! — my train, — my
steed ! — away this hour !

[*Coming up to Urilda, with irony.*

Grieve not for my departure, gentle maid ;

I shall return again, — return full soon,

But, not as wooers come. — My lord Fredolfo,
I thank you for your splendid, noble courtesy,
And thus I pledge my hand, and pledge my
soul,

My foot shall pause not, nor my thoughts have
rest,

Nor mine eyes close, nor my dry lip taste food,
Till with all implements of furious will,
Intensest wit, deadly, heart-nested vengeance,
And zeal of hate, I've wrought you full repayment.

Fred. (Retiring calmly.) Rail to the winds,
chafed lord, — they *may* regard thee.

Look up, Urilda ; tremble not, my child !

Wall. Hell and its furies burn within me !

[Draws his sword, and rushes at Fredolfo.

Urilda screams, and darts between them.

Uril. Ah !

[Fredolfo's attendants gather round — a tumult — Wallenberg disarmed.

Fred. (Calmly.) Give him his sword again —
let fall your weapons !

By heaven, I smite to earth the arm that's
raised —

He is beneath my roof. Throw wide the gates.
Count Wallenberg, you may depart in safety.

[Exit, leading out Urilda, who sinks on him, exhausted.

Wall. Hence ! let me plunge into the night's
thick gloom,

Pierce the dark forest, — in the cavern hide me,

If that their darkness may conceal my shame.

[*Rushing out; he is detained by Berthold, who clings to him.*]

Bert. One moment, noble Wallenberg, one moment!

Wall. What worm art thou, that twin'st around my knees?

Hence! or I spurn thee!

Bert. Spurn me not, dread lord,—

I am a worm, whose sting can pierce—Fredolfo.

(*More eagerly, as Wallenberg listens.*)

There is a deed, untold to mortal ear,

There is a thing, unthought by mortal minds,—

A thing of guilt, of horror, and of shame,

And him that wrought it only Berthold knows!

Wall. There is a glowing malice in thy visage,—

There is a kindling devil in thine eye,—

Go on — I do believe thee — tell thy tale.

Bert. Secure my life — I am Fredolfo's vassal —

Secure my safety first!

Wall. His vassal, say'st thou?

If thou can'st evil of Fredolfo tell,

I will unto my breast, with friendly clasp,

Hug thy deformity; — thou shalt be great,

Be robed in silk, and lodged in palaces —

Beauty shall smile on thee, and thou on high

Shalt stand among the nobles of the land,

So thou wilt show but evil of Fredolfo!

Bert. I ask not that — I ask a lighter boon.

Wall. Ask what thou wilt, it shall be granted thee!

(*Berthold approaching very slowly, and whispering.*)

Bert. Thy father perish'd by a hand unknown,

But not to all.

Wall. My father — perished! speak!

Bert. (*Whispering.*) The brand that pierced the breast of Wallenberg Hung in the sheath of — Ha!

Enter Fredolfo.

Fred. (*With calm dignity.*) Count Wallenberg,

I had forgot the duties of a host; —

O'er the wild mazes of our mountain tracks

Ten of my boldest vassals shall conduct you.—

Depart in safety, guided by the care

Of him against whose breast your arm was raised.

Wall. (*With irony.*)

Most generous, noble host; I shall depart,

And take with me a sure and faithful guide,

Who will my swift and ready steps conduct

Through mazes darker than your mountain-tracks.—

(*Suddenly advancing, and with emphasis.*)

I claim your vassal, Berthold, for my guide!

Fred. (*Horror struck.*) Ha!

Bert. (*Going up to him with a sneer.*)

Farewell, my lord—your duteous vassal leaves you. [A pause.

[*Fredolfo recovers, and gives his hand to him with a mixed emotion, arising from a wish to conceal his agitation from Wallenberg, and a faint hope to excite compassion in Berthold.*

Fred. (*Slowly.*) Farewell.

Wall. (*Significantly.*) Farewell, my lord Fredolfo!

Ho! Berthold, — follow me!

[*As they go out, Fredolfo, losing all self-command, rushes after Berthold with a wild attempt; Berthold gives him a look of malignity; Wallenberg turns on him, with affected surprise, mixed with disdain; Fredolfo, in an agony, throws himself into the arms of his own attendants.*

Fred. Lost! lost! Oh God, for ever!

(*He is conveyed off.*)

[*Exeunt Wallenberg and Berthold, triumphantly.*

End of the Second Act.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A wild Forest Scene : Fredolfo's Castle and St. Gothard in the back ground. Time, evening. Fredolfo enters, lost in meditation ; he is silent for some time, then starts on looking round him and discovering where he is.

Fred. Where am I now ? — Where have my wanderings led me ?

It is the scene ! — that bare and blasted pine —

It is the hour ! — that pale and stormy twilight —

It is the spot ! — I yet could count the blood-drops. —

(Staggering with horror, as he traces every distinct spot.)

Here long he strove, — and still I grappled with him, —

And here I fell with him, — in horror roll'd ; —
Here his strong foot-stamps tore the bloody earth up !

Here the trail'd corse track'd every step with gore, —

The demon, Berthold, grinning at his burden !

And here — Hark ! hark ! — a voice — a step —
a spy ! —

Waldo enters, and Fredolfo turns on him very sternly.

“ *Fred.* What makes thee wandering here so late ?

“ *Wal.* I sought you.

“ *Fred.* Sought me, and wherefore, sir ? am I that thing

“ My slaves must watch, and say ‘ ’tis vesper time,

“ And you must hie you home ? ” — what is’t to thee

“ If here I linger’d seeking home no more ? —

“ *Wal.* Oh quit, my lord, this lonely fearful place !

“ *Fred.* (*Starting.*) What is there in its gloom of loneliness,

“ That should suggest that wish ?

“ *Wal.* I know not, sir !

“ *Fred.* Nor I, — begone !

“ *Wal.* These lone and nightly walks

“ Do much impair your strength.

“ *Fred.* (*with gloomy carelessness.*) It is no matter.

“ *Wal.* Count Wallenberg —

“ *Fred.* Begone, or I shall hate thee ; name his name,

“ And the loud echo of these pines shall curse thee,

Being of mountains born — away, begone! —
Let the dew fall, or let the tempest rave,
To me it recks not. Slave! must I bid twice?

Fred. (Alone, looking after Waldo.)

He knows it — yes, he knows it! — 'tis no matter —

The world must know it. — Berthold — ay —
his image

Darts like an adder in my mental path,
Where'er I turn my thoughts. — Years, years,
have fled, —

The deed is dead — the slumbering world forgets —

The tide of time sweeps by, and in its murmurs
Has drown'd suspicion's whisper. — All is safe —
But Berthold lives in vivid consciousness,
The wakeful demon of the buried secret,
Watching the hour when vengeance reads the
spell :

He lives — he knows — he hates — and he betrays!

“ Fiend form'd in wrath to urge and lash the
crime !

“ I saw the burning malice of thy glance,

“ I saw the hellish menace of thy scowl,

“ I felt the thunder of thy parting tread,

“ That parting told of meeting soon — and terrible !”

(Pausing and looking round. A burst of military music.)

(*With great horror.*) Wherefore is this? if it be
Wallenberg —

If?—if?—there is nor doubt, nor hope—'tis
he!

Enter Berthold.

Bert. (Sneeringly.) Hail, noble sir!—my lord,
Count Wallenberg,
Would crave a moment's audience of your lei-
sure,
On matters that concern the state's behoof.

*Fred. (Beginning the speech with assumed dig-
nity, and then losing all self-command.)*
Say to your lord—no matter—go, thou wretch!
I can bear aught but thy abhorred sight!

*Enter Wallenberg, Knights, and military
Attendants.*

Wall. (with irony throughout.) Once more a
late and uninvited guest,
I press upon Fredolfo's privacy; —
In faith, my lord, your ample, noble usage
Shames a way-worn and humble traveller; —
You scorn above your guests to spread a canopy
Less spacious than the heavens, or yield them
hangings
Less richly wrought than those pine-skirted
rocks. —

Berthold, thou know'st his mood—I pray thee,
tell him

That wandering knights his mountain-palace
seek

All in the twilight pale, and pray him dear,
For knighthood's sake, to do them courtesy.

*[A look of triumphant consciousness to pass
between Wallenberg and Berthold.]*

Bert. (Approaching Fredolfo.) My lord Fredolfo, you have heard my message;—
Throw wide your ample halls; within their range
There are strange objects of peculiar interest,
Which sure yon noble traveller fain would
see!

Fred. (Turning on him.) Sir—to your lord I
answer:—Wallenberg,
Your arm, last night, was raised against my
life;
If through yon gates, unshrinking, you can
pass—
If on my halls unblushing you can tread,
Enter;—but, to your proud luxurious train
My mountain-hut will prove a homely hostel.

Wall. We will not trespass on your bounty
yet;—

I would inhale this free and mountain air,
Whose impulse to the soaring soul doth lend
Pure inspiration,—'mid whose holy waftings
To breathe is to be virtuous!—O, my lord,
How sweet, while wandering 'mid these solemn
shades,

To commune with your clear and lofty spirit,—
What recollections follow you —

Fred. (Starting.) My lord! —

Wall. What high associations! — doubtless,
here,

From every pine a kindred spirit whispers,
And every turf you tread thrills as you touch it
With grateful memory of some glorious action.

Fred. Sir — of your praise I reckon not — my
fallen country,

Amid her ruins, may remember one
Whose single arm upheld the pile, and last,
Amid its shivering fragments, rear'd its strength,
Till nought was left to save! — Of your wild
words,

Or of their unsought meaning, sir, I am
Unheeding as unconscious!

Wall. Be not chafed!

Treat not thus roughly guests, who, all for
love,

Through the dim, perilous, and stormy eve,
Have breathless spurred to bear you joyful
tidings.

Fred. Tidings, my lord?

Wall. Yes, — tidings, honoured sir!

And glorious tidings for the patriot's ear,
When lurking crime is dragg'd from its foul
hold!

There are tidings, sir, in Altdorf — the proud
city

Is full of busy murmurs; — in her streets,

Men grasp each other's hands, as each had
found

Their heart's best wishes, —joying that the
search

Hath ceased—the man of blood at last is found!

Fred. (Trembling.) The man of blood is
found! —

Wall. My father's murderer,
Thou knowest, hath through long years been
vainly sought.

Fred. (Much agitated.) I must — I do re-
member very well—

Wall. The murderer of Wallenberg is traced—

*[Pauses long, fixing his eye on Fredolfo,
whose emotion is visible.]*

The murderer of Wallenberg is known —

[Again.]

The murderer of Wallenberg is seized! —

[Rushes on him.]

Here, take him, guards, and drag him to your
dungeons!

[Giving him to the guards.]

Fred. (Struggling.) This unsupported charge
— this lawless outrage —

Off, slaves! — Proud Austrian, at your peril be
it —

This matchless insult! — have I then no friend?

No brand of follower raised in my defence?

Beneath the shade of mine own native towers,

Like gyved felon, am I helpless dragg'd,

No arm to aid, no voice to plead for me? —

Bert. Let not my lord thus call for hopeless aid,
While Berthold's zealous duty waits unclaim'd !
Mine be the voice whose sounds shall whisper peace, —
Mine be the arm whose help is sure and speedy.

Wall. Away, thou gibing fiend, with thy vile mockery,
Crush not the fallen victim.— Murderer,
We bind the chain around thy doomed body,
And summon thee to meet thy mortal judgment !

Urilda rushes in.

Uril. (Shrieking.) Hold, hold, for mercy ! 'tis his daughter kneels,
O, ye are human, though ye look not so !—
Wallenberg—and my father !—fettters ! guards !
What is this fearful dream ?

Wall. It is no dream —
Wake from thy trance of pride, vain girl, and know
I grasp the chain that drags him to the scaffold !

Fred. Why art thou here ?

Uril. Dark men look sternly on thee,
Thy hands are bound—and dost thou ask thy child,

‘ Why art thou here !’

Wall. 'Twere well, fair maid, to spare
This lavish luxury of sorrowing beauty.—

Wring thy white hands before the judgment
seat;

Spread thy bright locks like hovering angel's
plumes

When the axe trembles o'er thy father's head;—

Perchance the hoary Syndics then may weep;—

Perchance the headsman's quivering hand may
pause

Ere the blow falls upon that murderer's neck.—

Uril. Murderer!—my father!—

Villain! and liar!—O! I feel unsex'd!

O, that this hand were in a gauntlet mail'd,

And I would fearless down thy slanderous
throat

Dash the foul falsehood.—Speak, my father,
speak!

O, the bright energy of conscious truth,

The pure clear light of thy most cloudless soul,

Will sink these baffled slaves to earth before
thee,

And turn this shame to worship.—Father,
speak!

Wall. Ay! let him speak!

[*They all gather round him—He stands paralyzed with horror among them.*

Bert. Speak, noble, injured lord,

And dart conviction on our dazzled souls!

Uril. Away! ye harass him—he'll list to
me—

He doth not know your voices.—Father! Fa-
ther!

One word,—those chains from your freed hands
shall fall, —

One word, — these slaves are prostrate at your
feet.

Speak! Speak! (*shrieking with agony.*)

Fred. Lead on!

[*Falls senseless in the arms of the Guard.*

Uril. (*struggling.*) Ye shall not tear him
from me! —

Stay!—he will speak anon—he is overpower'd!

[*She kneels between Wallenberg and Berthold,
supplicating them alternately, with desperate
and hopeless eagerness.*

Berthold! thou wast his vassal — plead for me!

Wallenberg!—thou didst woo me;—look on me!

None, none will hear me! — he, even he is deaf!

A dungeon — God! my father in a dungeon!

Drag — drag him there — but I must follow
him!

[*She is dragged off, clinging to Fredolfo, who re-
mains senseless.*

SCENE II.

*Altdorf; Picturesque buildings in the Gothic
style — The Prison in perspective — Austrian
Guards, repelling the Swiss who fill the streets
— Adelmars in disguise among them.*

Swiss. (*To an Austrian, who is driving him
back.*) I pray thee now, good ruffian, spurn me
not!

I will stand here right patiently, to see
Mine ancient master to a prison borne,
And to mine home bear back a broken heart.

Adel. Who art thou that speakest kindly of
Fredolfo?

Swiss. And who art thou, that of a free-born
Swiss

Asks if he loves Fredolfo?

Adel. Can ye love him,
And see him clutch'd in their foul, damned
grasp?

The stones do heave and quiver at his tread,
Yet ye are mute and motionless!
The walls are trembling where the champion
walks

His way to shame — yet ye no feeling have!
The very air seems tortured by the echo
That answers to his name of infamy!
Yet ye in silence hear the withering sound,
And gape with idiot stare upon the pageant.

Swiss. What should we do?

Adel. What should you do! — My voice is in
my brand!

2d Swiss. And who art thou, who 'mid the
people that love him,
Forcest thyself, unknown, unsought, unsum-
mon'd?

Adel. I am a man Fredolfo hates; — a man
Fredolfo persecutes; — yet I am he,
Who with bare arm and single sword do press

Amid his native city's thronged streets,
Lifting my sole hand like a war-worn banner,
Which no band gathers round.

Swiss. (shouting.) It does! It does!

[They gather round him tumultuously.]

*Enter Fredolfo in chains, supported by Urilda—
A mixed crowd of Soldiers, Peasantry, and
Citizens follow tumultuously.*

Uril. (Triumphantly.) See how they gather
round thee — proudly gather,
As in the day of battle — how they hang
Upon thy looks, as in the hall of judgment,
When speech was eloquence, and judgment
truth!

God bless you, brave and faithful hearts! —
God bless you!

Fred. (much agitated.)

And who are ye who proudly press around me?
“Bend ye those arms against the heart of justice

“Or against mine? if here, let them be buried:
“Perchance their aim is just. My countrymen,
“To the strong battle I have led you! baffled
“From its dread brunt have I e'er shrunk?
Ye're silent!”

My countrymen! on your dear loves I call —
Not on your arms! — On the awful front of
justice

Bend not thy hostile frown — I am a man —
Perchance an erring — (*pauses*) Innocent, or
guilty,

Heaven's arm alone can right me — Yours are
nought !

Dash down those brands — then to your homes,
my countrymen !

There fight with other weapons — kneel, and
pray —

Pray that a sinful soul — all souls are sinful —
I will not burden ye — a pleading angel
Stands by my side, and soothes, and strengthens
me !

I do not need your prayers.

[*Sinks on Urilda.*

Enter Wallenberg and Austrians, Guards, &c.

Wall. What — lingering still ? Away with
him to the dungeon !

Dost thou take pride to tread these streets in
shame,

A fetter'd felon, courting vile compassion —
Clanking thy chains to the accordant howl
Of wither'd beldams, and gross, gaping
burghers ?

Away with him ! — And ye, coarse knaves, be-
gone !

Your hero hath changed his temple for a dun-
geon !

By heaven, they loiter !

Fred. Hence, depart, my friends !
I have no power — but I have still a voice —
“ A voice that near your country’s banner
 peal’d
“ Like thunder round a spread and floating
 cloud.”

Hear its last cry : — depart — Fredolfo asks it !
 (*The crowd disperse.*)

Wall. And Wallenberg commands it ! Drag
 him hence !

Hence ! to the prison with him in their sight !

Uril. Come then, to prison — though no
 breath of heaven
Shall fan our brows, their thrilling pores shall
 ne’er

Be damp, like thine, with horror’s livid dews !
The stone must pillow us ; but shriek like
 that

Which turns thy doom to fire shall ne’er assail
 us.

Fetters must bind those limbs that sanctify
 them—

Their iron shall not enter to the soul,
Like those a tyrant’s crimes have forged for
 thee !

(*To Fred.*) Why dost thou droop on those ab-
 horred chains ?

Cheerly, my noble father—heed it not—

It was a passing agony—’tis o’er !

[*Struggling to dry her tears, and exit, leading
 out her father.*]

(Wallenberg stalks triumphantly across the stage, viewing them with scorn as they retire.)

Wall. Oh! it will be a demon-luxury
To watch the throes of her expiring pride,
Beneath fear's mortal grasp—then, then, to see
her—

Her tears, her tresses, white and clasped hands,
And heaving bosom, heaving at my knee,
In weeping beauty's bright profusion wild!
There's not a bloody page I will not turn
With burning study, so that I may wreak
Their full-collected pangs upon Fredolfo,
While that pale shrieking girl stands witness by!

Berthold rushes in.

Bert. Waste not another moment,
'Twas he—'twas he—Urilda's dark-hair'd mi-
nion—

The youth for whom she spurns thee—'twas his
voice,

Even now, that stirr'd the crowd to mutiny—
And he hath 'scaped us!

Wall. 'Scaped us? no, he must not,
Though he were borne beyond the reach of man,
I know a lure shall charm him to the snare,
Urilda's voice shall soothe, betray, and doom
him!

When those we hate become our tools of ven-
geance,

Its work is perfect:—Proud and wretched girl,
When the strain'd balls of agony shall wander

From a sire's corse, and rest upon a lover's,—
Then, then, remember Wallenberg was scorn'd!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The Interior of a Prison.

*Enter Fredolfo, leaning on Urilda. Attendants
belonging to the Prison.*

Atten. (with compassion)

Please you, my lord, rest here.

Fred. (not heeding him)

I thank thee, it is very well!

Atten. The air, I fear, blows chilly through
that grating.

Fred. Perchance it does—I do not feel it yet!

Atten. Will you not rest upon this matted
couch?

Fred. (sits down, holding Urilda) I thought I
had, even now—I crave your pardon—

Where is my daughter?

Uril. I am here—I'm here!

Clasping your dear hand, clinging to your neck.

Will you not look at me?

Fred. The place is dark—

Mine eyes are dim o' the sudden — things look
strangely—

But you will pardon me—and all is well.

Uril. (weeping)

Oh! rend not mine heart in twain!

My friends, depart!

[*Exeunt attendants.*]

Fred. (anxiously)

There is a thick and heavy breathing here,
The very air seems shackled:—
It comes o'er me like an embracing prisoner,—
Who, in his salutation, feels his chain
Grate on the breast he clasps.

Uril. It is not so!

The air through yon light grating blows full
pleasantly.

*Fred. Urilda, this dark air hath been em-
poison'd*

By many a murderer's breath.

*Uril. But thine shall consecrate it—thine, my
father!*

Oh! future sufferers here shall sit in pride,
Shall hug the chains that now I clasp in agony,
And proudly say, when from its horrid walls
They tread, "I have been in Fredolfo's dun-
geon!"

*Fred. Away! many a murderer shall here
abide!*

Dally not with my chains—thou canst not
break them.

Uril. Thy country's arm shall break them!

Fred. A mightier arm (pointing to heaven)
Alone can break the chain that binds the soul!
Sit down—and if thou wilt on subjects talk
That hold alliance with this horrid place,
I'll talk of such to thee.—

There was a man, I knew him once, I thought,
But even his daughter would not know him now.

Uril. It cannot be—his daughter still must know him.

Fred. He was unhappy——

Uril. Then she loved him better!

Fred. But—he was guilty!

Uril. Oh! impossible!

A father guilty in his daughter's eyes!

Fred. I must go on.

That wretched man, through years of misery,
Had gone to where the guilty meet their fate—
None knew the thought that brought him there;
perchance

They deem'd it pity!—No—he watch'd in anguish

How the pale wretch did on the scaffold stare—
Because—and if he had a daughter—then—

(Pauses in dreadful agitation, then proceeding with great difficulty, and sometimes glancing at Urilda, who sits by him in progressive and horrible stupefaction.)

The night came on—beside his couch of stone
His daughter sat—as now thou dost by me—

(Another pause—she looks at him long, without speaking.)

(Pointing upwards) There was a dungeon o'er them—its dark vaults

A merciful shadow on his damp brow cast,
And she, who came with heart as light as thine,
(She lets go hold of his chains.)

Clasping her father's chains in triumph—

When she did hear that father's tale of crime,—
dropp'd them!

Uril. (after a pause) But then she smiled
upon him—did she not?

Or tried to smile? (*forcing a convulsive smile.*)

Fred. (tossing his chains in sudden agony)

I am a murderer!

Uril. (starting from him, and bursting into a horrible laugh) My father! and a murderer!

Ha, ha, ha!

(*Recovering and going up to him tenderly, and hanging on him.*)

Nay, do not try me so—thou speak'st in jest—
But try me so no more!

[*Hides her head in his breast.*

Fred. I—I have spoken!

Uril. (struggling with him in desperation)

Retract—retract! for Heaven's—for mercy's
sake!

Fred. Horrible truth!

(*She rushes away from him, and remains at a great distance, gazing on him with a look of horror.*)

Fred. (holding out his arm to her)

My child! my child! if crime like mine may
plead

Extremest wrong, and passion urged to mad-
ness—

These fetters will not plead to thee in vain;—
She will not speak—she will not listen to me—
My child and nature have abandoned me!

Uril. (flying into his arms and clasping him)
Oh no!—no!—no!—they have not!

Fred. (quite exhausted) Leave me—leave me! There is, perchance, a nook in this dark dwelling,

Where I may, trembling, supplicate for mercy
Alone—for in this moment's agony,
Even thine—thy sight is painful to mine eyes!

[*He retires slowly to a recess in the prison.*
(*Urilda remains alone, fixed and stupified, in the front of the stage.*)

Wallenberg enters silently, and approaches her—she does not see him till he is close to her—she then starts, and clings to him, with a dreadful scream.

Uril. Save him, oh! save him! Thou alone
canst save him!

Wall. Why this appealing shriek—this frantic clasp—

These lifted hands—this prostrate agony?
What does Fredolfo's daughter seek from me?
You shrink, you turn away, you veil your face—
What! is it possible? Speak—answer me—
Is he then guilty? Is your father guilty?
Speak! I must hear the word—your father
guilty?—

Uril. (falling on the ground)
He is—my father!

Wall. Prostrate at my feet!

The flower that scorn'd the touch must court
the tread—

Rise, lady, rise! you much debase yourself
To clasp the knees of a rejected wooer!

Uril. (writhing at his feet in agonizing humiliation)

Let not my gracious lord in wrath remember
The frantic folly of a wayward girl!

Wall. (with increasing bitterness)

And when I trembled at Urilda's feet,
What was my answer?—"Never! never! never!
No, Wallenberg—no, Austrian—never! never!"

*Uril. Oh! I was proud—was mad—I did
not know*

That I was the vile thing I'm sunk to now.

*Wall. I was a villain—liar—was't not so?
Ay—liar was the term!*

Uril. Oh! no—not so—

How can you crush a worm, to see it writhe?

Wall. (changing his whole manner)

Urilda, I can—pity, and forgive!

Uril. (looking at him, then shuddering)

Can you?—Oh, never, never—Oh! forgive—

Can you forgive me?

Can you indeed? *(clinging to his vest.)*

*Wall. I can, and more—relieve—
Can give your father liberty and life!*

Uril. (with convulsive laughter)

Life!—liberty! and the poor guilty man—
Blessings, oh blessings!

Wall. Hold—till I deserve them.

I dare not, in my duty's awful trust,
Rend ope the doors of an arraigned felon ;
I cannot, as a son, from the loathed arm
That slew my father strike the claspings fether,
And say, with horrid gratitude, Kind murderer !

You stabb'd my sire — your guerdon is your liberty !

Uril. Well, well, my lord—(*impatiently.*)

Wall. But, may not this be done ?

Is there not yet among the patriot's friends
Some youth of bold and enterprising arm,
Who, with small cost of noisy eloquence,
May tempt the rabble on his prison-doors
To try their hands' rude strength, and not in vain—

While I to distant quarters lead the Austrians,
And leave the pass unguarded ? May this be ?

Uril. (*clasping her hands*)

Oh, heaven ! it may—it may !

Wall. Know'st thou of such ?

Uril. Perchance there may be one.

Wall. And one whom thou canst trust—whom
thou couldst love ?

Uril. My lord !

Wall. Oh ! summon him ! on the instant
summon him !

Uril. (*kissing his hand eagerly*)

Nay, do not wrest thy generous hand from me !

And he shall live?—Oh! from our distant
home,

In poverty, in exile, yea in death—

How blessings shall steam up like incense for
thee!

“ Oh! think of a rich offering of full hearts,

“ Burning upon an altar lit for thee,

“ Bow’d knees, clasp’d hands, strong, eager,
trembling prayers,

“ That melt the saints, and take the heavens by
storm !”

Wall. And he thou lov’st—he too will pray
for me!

Uril. My lord!

Wall. And may not luckless Wallenberg—
Albeit an exile from your soft retreat—
Steal with light step upon its paradise,
Gaze on your slumbers in its bowers of balm,
And smile on you, as I do now!

Uril. Oh, God! (*hiding her face*)
Not that dread smile—Nay, do not turn from
me—

Be not incensed—for my heart is sick
With doubts, with bodings, and with many
fears.

Wall. Thy fears and doubts, ere midnight,
shall be ended—
Summon thy friend—prepare thee for the hour!
When the bell tolls, remember Wallenberg!

Uril. For ever, and for ever, in my prayers!
[*Kneeling.*

Fred. (rushing forward)

Hold, frantic wretch! he mocks thee—Wallenberg! *(seizing Urilda's arm.)*

If thou art here in scorn, I pity thee—

If thou art here in mercy, I disdain——

Uril. (struggling with, and trying to soften Wallenberg) Oh! heed him not!

Fred. Heed *him* not, thou lost girl!

(Urilda struggles between them.)

I call on Heaven for mercy—not on man!

I've lived the champion of my country's rights,

I'll die the victim of my country's justice!

Wall. (rushing furiously away)

Die, and despair!

Uril. (clinging to him, as he drags her along)

Oh! he must not die!

Thou'lt save him yet—thou wilt—thou'rt merciful,

Piteous, and good—I will be thine!

(He dashes her from him.)

Thou wilt not spurn me—thou hast knelt to me—

Wall. (with horrible irony, repeating his last words as he turns on her, while she kneels)

When the bell tolls, remember Wallenberg!

Uril. (not understanding the menace)

Oh! yes—remember thee—with blessings! blessings! *[Wallenberg rushes out.]*

(She kneels, knocking in agony at the door.)

Hear me! Oh, hear me!—Oh! the door is closed—

The door of hope is closed!—Yet hear me,
Wallenberg!

[*Dashing her head in desperation against the door, then rushing back to her father.*

(*Falling at his feet.*)

Lost! lost! for ever lost!

Fred. (*calmly clasping her hand, and pointing to heaven*) Not lost for ever!!!

[*Curtain drops.*

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

A splendid apartment in Wallenberg's palace.

A Banquet seen through arches in the back ground.

Music.

*(Wallenberg rushes from the Banquet-room with
distracted gesture.)*

Wall. Break off your minstrelsy.

[Music ceases.]

And must I love her?

And must this maddening pulse and feverish
heart

Beat for her still? for her—Can it be love?

Hate's fellest throe were luxury to this!

I could rend out the veins that throb for her;—

I could on mine own heart fix suicide's fangs,

So they defaced that form it dares to cherish!

“ I dream'd that I had torn her from my bosom;

“ I dream'd—I knew not that it was Urilda:—

“ I woke, and found her there.

“ I feel her in her prostrate beauty still,

“ Her cold hands twined in mine,—her marble
lip

“ Like that o'er which no breath of life e'er
thrill'd;

“ The stony fixture of the unpleading eye,

“ When hope’s last light is quench’d — that
gazes on

“ The fearful eloquence of convulsed limbs,

“ Whose writhings speak what the choak’d
tongue denies.

“ Away! ’tis folly—vile and loathed folly!—

“ I will upon my proud rebellious heart

“ Lay the keen stripe of each remember’d
wrong,

“ And lash it like a lion into madness.”

Did she not spurn me?—That I could forgive.

Did she not shrink from me, as never maiden

From wooer shrunk?—Even that I could forgive.

Has she not dared to love another?—

And can a lover pardon that?—No, never!

My lips can utter “ never!” maiden, too—

And I can feel that stern, immortal purpose—

That iron thought—that wall of adamant—

That *never* of the soul, divorcing hope,

And stamping fate upon futurity.

Enter Berthold hastily.

Bert. How hast thou fared — is Adelmar se-
cured?

Wall. My fierce and wayward mood hath
crossed my will (*sullenly*).

I had upon her fearing credulous heart

Wrought the nice work of art,—she would have
fled

To the earth’s verge for hope and Adelmar—

“ She bless’d me, — then I pitied her : — she
kiss’d

“ My dooming hand, that trembled in her
grasp.”

Then rush’d that raving dotard from his nook—
His cunning madness foil’d the hopeful snare,—
My mood was stirr’d—I cursed them, and I
parted.—

Do the next feat of wily mischief, thou ;
I hate, and curse, — but thou canst curse, and
smile !

Bert. (derisively)

Yea—such a smile as I can spare thee now—
Thou, who canst let even spleen defeat thy ven-
geance !

“ *Wall.* I was a fool ! with sullen spleen I
own it.

“ Chide not, or thou may’st feel the wrath thou
mockest !

“ E’en from my boyhood did I loathe the hand

“ That proffer’d me a kindness—my soul’s pride

“ Had rather met a scorn it could revenge :—

“ Yet I did love,—at that proud maiden’s feet

“ I flung the heart she tramples on. She knew
not

“ ’Twas on the adder’s slumbering pride she trod.

“ I hate her !—Need I seek another cause—”

Bert. (looking round) Hush ! hush ! she comes
to seek thee—linger not—

Thy passion will break forth, and mar mine art.

(*More eagerly*) She shall unto thy bent and
thrilling ear

Own all her father's crime!

Wall. She did—I heard it.

Bert. She shall unto thy headsman's bloody
stroke

Yield the white throat of Adelmar — yea, bless
thee,

—In credulous woman's fond unconsciousness—
For that thy hand doth speed the stroke of
death.

Wall. Ay—let him perish—let me see him
perish!

My stormy mood would burst thy puny toils,
Albeit I need them.—Weave thy web alone,
But look thou wind it fast and dark around her.

(*Looking out towards her.*)

Thou, whom I know not if I loathe or love,—
Who mak'st me tremble with unnamed sensa-
tion,—

Whom I could clasp, or curse, embrace, or stab;
Round whom I could, like the dark serpent,
fold,

To twine, and — ha! to crush thee!

[*Rushes out.*]

*Enter Urilda; she approaches, without knowing
Berthold, who has turned away from her, and
addresses him as a domestic of Wallenberg.*

Uril. Turn, turn—in mercy turn, my gracious
friend!

A wretched suppliant to thy lord's high presence
Would win admittance by thy gentle ministry,—
Heaven, in thy soul's last need, so deal with
thee,

As thou dost speed my boon!

Bert. (turning on her)

What wouldst thou, maiden?

Uril. (screaming with horror at his sight)

Ah! Berthold!—Serpent! have I trod on thee?
And art thou twining round the mercy-seat
I fled to cling to?—Mercy is not there—
Forgive, forgive me! (*changing.*) I must plead
to thee—

Thou hast not eat Fredolfo's bread to curse it—
Thou hast not known Fredolfo's heart to pierce
it!

(Approaching nearer to him.)

The blessing of his roof is on thee still,
Its holy air hangs round thee, and I feel it—
The sweet breeze of the valley breathes on me!
Friend,—servant of my father—spurn me not—
The daughter of thy master bends to thee!

Bert. (aside) Love knows no luxury like this!

(Turning to her) Beshrew me,

Fair damsel, but thy sad plight pities me.—
Alone—untended—with dishevell'd locks!
And did the nice Urilda, all regardless (*irony*)
Of her state's pride, and of her maiden fame,
Traverse at midnight the deserted streets,
To woo the audience of a feverish reveller,
All too susceptible of fair maiden's charms?

Uril. Thou speak'st in mockery—hadst thou
e'er a father?

I fear'd for one—I know no other fear!

Bert. Thy father's life hangs trembling on
these moments:—

Speak! wouldst thou save him?

Uril. (*with emotion*) Would I?—

Bert. Sign this scroll,

And Adelmar, ere midnight, with strong arm
Shall burst thy father's fetters—sign this scroll!

Uril. Give it me—but, oh! Berthold, glare
not on me—

Why must my hand thus beckon him to dan-
ger?—

Bert. The question mocks my patience!—
Will he trust

Aught but thy hand?

Would it beseem the governor of Altdorf
To break the chains of an arraigned murderer?
Does it beseem the daughter of Fredolfo
To pause, when her sole touch can burst those
chains?

Would Adelmar obey the Austrian's bidding?

Will Adelmar reject Urilda's call?

Uril. Give me the paper!

(*She snatches the paper, then shrieks at seeing the
horrid change in his expression.*)

Canst thou betray me—canst thou?—

Say that thou wilt not—speak, but look not on
me!

Bert. Have I not said?

Uril. Swear—swear !

Bert. And by what power ?

Uril. (*with fervent agony*) Swear by that
Heaven who saw a father's crime ;—
That Heaven who sees a daughter's broken
heart ;—
That Heaven who sees the tortured and the
perjured ;—
That Heaven who on my crush'd and whirling
brain
Hath flash'd a horrid light—swear, this instant
swear !

Bert. (*with the utmost affected coldness*)
Why, here's a coil to win thee to thy will.—
I care not—I—to bear such thankless office—
The sorry meed of fond officious virtue—
In faith I am too pitiful, and patient !
(*Increasing his assumed indifference as he watches
her increasing agony.*)
The hours are waning ; life wanes fast with
them :—

The beam of morn may gild a bloody scaffold.
(*She staggers towards him.*)

Sign an' thou wilt—hold ! that is not the paper—
Thou'st seized my garment's hem !

Uril. (*madly*) Give me the paper !
There ! there !

(*She snatches the paper and signs her name.*)
Thou hast it now—thou hast me, Berthold !
(*Attempting to snatch the paper.*)

But if—oh, no—I will not think.

Bert. (detaining the paper) Thou must
—In this dread moment of thy utmost fate—
Be more than Nature's woman, — think and
act.

Uril. (Resolutely.) I will !

Bert. And can'st thou ?

Uril. And I can !

Bert. Away then !

Sit by thy father with a patient smile,—
Win o'er the weary hours with constant talk,—
And when the prison-bell o'er vault and dome
Booms its deep sound, startling the wretch that
sleeps not,

Rouse all thy courage at thy utmost need,
For then will be a need to try that courage.

[*Urilda rushes to him in an agony of gratitude.*
Away, and save thy father !

Uril. I must bless thee !

[*Rushes out.*

Bert. (Following her with a wild laugh.)

How weak a thing is woman, when she loves !—
How fierce a thing is woman, when she hates !—

Enter Wallenberg and Officer.

I have — I have it — in my hand I grasp it —
The doom of Adelmars ! — Urilda seal'd it.

Wall. Away ! begone, and find him — should
he 'scape ! —

Bert. Fear not — I've watch'd his steps —
he is at hand,

With all his desperate band still prompt and restless —

They want but this — (*the paper*) and they, ere long, shall have it.

Off. Shall we not toll the bell, and give the alarm?

Wall. Toll for thy knell, if that thou dare to touch it!

[*Throwing off his fierceness, and assuming a malignant caution.*

On, slave! — but steal with an assassin's tread. —
The mother, to whose breast he smiling clung
In life's young morn, when life is loveliest,
Felt not his weal more dear than Wallenberg!
No hand must be upon him — he is mine!
Not worlds shall buy his heart-drops' priceless ransom.

Before her eyes — and summon'd by her hand —
Then, — then, — to see him writhe — and hear her shriek —

Oh! let me drain that last rich draught of vengeance,

Then — fling the cup away!

[*Rushes out, followed by Berthold and Officer.*

SCENE II.

A vaulted Room in the Prison ; large folding doors in the back. Urilda and Fredolfo discovered.

Fred. And art thou here? Come to my breast
— Nay, do not —

These chains may bruise thee — I ne'er felt the
burden

Till their cold clasp made me forbid my
child's. —

Uril. (Embracing him.) They shall not keep
thee from me — they are light —

[Looking up at him with fond hope and confidence.]

Father! thou canst not be a murderer!

Fred. Go — close the door — I had forgot —
forgive me, —

A dungeon door is ever barr'd — My child! —

[She looks terrified.]

Nay, gaze not on me — it is horrible —

But it is just — my crime was horrible —

I've bow'd to ask forgiveness of my God —

[Kneels.]

I kneel to ask forgiveness of my child.

“ *Uril.* O, hold — nor drive me mad! — O,
wouldst thou see me

“ Dash on this floor of stone my desperate
brain ?”

Fred. I bend not now to Heaven, for Heaven hath spoke it —
But thou must speak it too.

Uril. (With deep emotion.) Well then, —
[*Rushing to him, and clasping him in her arms.*]

I cannot!

Fred. Urilda, hang not weeping on my neck —
There was an hour — Oh! that it was to come!
For I was virtuous then! — but —
Wallenberg! —

Uril. (Starting.) Wallenberg!

Fred. That bad man's father!
He, in my absence — To a daughter's ear
I cannot tell the tale of woe and shame! —
The base and brutal spoiler — in my absence —
[*A long pause.*]

The shriek I heard not rings for ever here —
[*Another pause, during which Urilda stands in conscious horror.*]

The spirit burst from its dismantled dwelling,
[*Rapidly.*]

And left thee motherless — and me a wretch.
Wild from my blasted home I rush'd — I met
him —

[*A long pause, he utters every following line with increasing difficulty, and she listens with increasing terror.*]

'Twas the dark twilight of a stormy eve, —
[*A longer pause, she watches him.*]
'Twas in a lonely mountain's dismal pass —

My hand was on my sword—the victim there—
I struck—

Uril. (Clinging to him with a scream of horror.) No—no—thou didst not!—no—

Fred. (Gloomily.) I did!

(Triumphantly.) This was the arm that struck!
—this arm again

Would smite that worse than murderer to the
earth!

Uril. (With a fearful hope.) There was no
witness?

Fred. Berthold stood by me,
And still he stands the stern and awful witness
Of that dark hour!

Uril. (Shuddering.) Berthold!—

Fred. (With increasing difficulty.) There was
another,—

A peasant boy—who did his innocent breast,
With loud and helpless outcry, long oppose
To blows not aim'd at him—Twas Adelmarr!
I hated him—from clime to clime I drove
him;—

But to his mountain-home he would return,—
Return to save thy life—and I repaid him—

[*Bitter self-reproach.*

I—thrust him in a dungeon—but—I freed
him.

Crime follow'd crime;—on murder treachery,
On treachery vengeance, and on vengeance
fear,

Came link on link, to bind me to perdition—

Each faster lock'd even by the toil to break
them :

[*With convulsive emotion.*]

But I have burst through all !

Uril. O, misery !

Fred. 'Twas misery unknown, unspeakable—
For I was guilty !

Uril. (*Clinging to him.*) Thou art innocent !
In the day's glare, or in the dungeon's gloom,—
In the sight of partial man and witnessing
angels,
In the sight of awful heaven, thou'rt innocent !
And heav'n will judge thee as thy daughter
judges.

(*A distant shout.*)

Fred. (*Starting from her arms.*) Hark ! hark !
that shout—what means it ?

Uril. (*With an exulting shriek.*) That thou'rt
innocent !

'Tis heaven's deep echo to a daughter's cry—
They come, they come to burst these horrid
walls !

Fred. (*Trembling.*) To burst these walls ?

Uril. I could not speak before
The secret of a heart too sad for hope—
Thou art their prize—and Adelmars their leader !

(*Shouts without.*)

Fred. (*With much agitation.*) Would they had
let me die ! I was prepared
For all but life ! — Would they would let me
die !

Uril. You shall not die—Hark! hark! they
come! they come!

Hark! to the peal of the thundering multi-
tude!—

Hark! to the crash of bolt, and bar, and beam!—

(The noise increases.)

*[Fredolfo sits down on a stone bench, and
clasps his hands over his forehead, while
Urilda, in an agony of joy, traverses the
stage, echoing every sound and shouting as
the assault on the prison-doors increases.*

‘And they come’ is in the shout, and the tread,
and the trample.—

They are here!

(The doors give way.)

Smite, harder smite—the saints to speed—

They yield—they fall—they’re here, and Adel-
mar—

Brave Adelmar their leader!

Wallenberg without.

Wall. Down with them! trample on them!

*Wallenberg rushes in with Ulric and a numerous
band, who surround Fredolfo.*

Waste not a moment on those baffled slaves—
Seize him—secure him—drag him to my feet,
My state’s whole treasure to the hand that holds
him!

Where is he? Where is Adelmar?

Ulric. He hath escaped !

Wall. (after a long pause of breathless fury,
going up to him.) Escaped ! [Seizing *Ulric*.

Thy life for his—escaped—to rush upon us

[letting go *Ulric*.

Like a recoiling wave that splits the rock—

His wild and rallied force will burst on us

Before the blow is struck—

(Pausing, and viewing *Fredolfo*.) No—no, it
shall not—

I have this victim yet—Guards ! seize the murderer !

[During *Wallenberg's* speech, *Urilda* shudders with wild stupefaction, not comprehending how *Wallenberg* can express such enmity against *Adelmar*.—She starts on seeing *Fredolfo* seized by *Wallenberg's* band, and flings herself at *Wallenberg's* feet, still believing him her friend.

Fred. I'm guilty—let me perish—save that innocent,

For, she—what hath she done ?

[Falls into their arms.

(*Urilda* kneeling to *Wallenberg*, who surveys her
with dreadful composure.)

Uril. See—see—they seize him—and is this
thy doing ?

Wallenberg ! Wallenberg !—my friend—preserver—

At thy command I summon'd *Adelmar* :

(Grasping his robe, and shaking it in despair.)

Wallenberg ! friend !—you pause in mockery—
(*with a faint laugh.*) Mock me no further—for
my brain is whirling.

[*Shrieking in despair to him.*

They've seized my father ! Are you not my
friend !

Are you not ? Speak ! speak !—speak !—or, I
shall madden !

[*Grappling him in an agony.—After enjoying it silently, he bursts into a demoniac laugh.*

Wall. Ha !—ha !—ha !—ha !

[*She looks torpid.*

Fred. (*Shaking his hand at him.*) Oh ! demon !
demon ! demon !

Wall. (*with ferocious triumph.*) Ay, shake
thy fetter'd hand in madness at me !

Uril. (*roused and interposing.*) Wallenberg !
lover—friend—one word of mercy—

Thou can'st not—no, thou art not such a demon !

Wall. (*all his fury bursting out.*)

Yes, a triumphant demon !—at my foot
The minor fiends in torment writhe and curse—

[*She throws herself at his feet hopelessly.*

(*Coldly.*) Kneel—kneel—in beauty's eloquent
agony,

That I may say—Urilda, never—never !

[*Passing by her as she clings to him, and pointing at Fredolfo, then turning to her with redoubled malignity.*

Thy father perishes—'tis justice dooms him !

Thy lover—ay, thy lover—hath escaped—

[Stamping with rage and agony.]

Or to a scaffold's black and bloody doom

Thy voice had lured him,—and thy hand had
led.—

Mine was the thought—mine should have been
the transport,

To make thy fond credulity his fate!—

[Turning to Fredolfo.]

But,—thou, at least, art mine—and thou shalt
feel it !

*[Turns to Ulric, and speaking with cold
solemnity.]*

Go, seek the headsman—tell him, the state's
service

From my reluctant tongue compels the word—
Death for Fredolfo !

Uril. (with a dreadful scream.)

No—not death—not death— *(To Ulric.)*

He said not death—or meant it—not—not
death ! *[Exit Ulric.]*

(Fredolfo attempts to interpose.)

Thou shalt not speak—there's mercy in his
face. *[to Fredolfo.]*

(Exultingly.) I see—I see it—though he knows
it not.

*Wall. (raising his head-dress, and fixing on
her the look of triumphant malignity.)*

Dost thou ?

[*Urilda, falling prostrate on encountering his look, and giving up hope.—Wallenberg, going, then returns to her, as she lies on the ground, and repeating the line in the third Act, with bitter irony.*

When the bell tolls, remember Wallenberg!

[*Going out, he speaks in eager and rapid tones to the guards.*

Make haste! make haste! do your dark work
with speed—

Swift their return—and fell will be their push!
But their wild battle shall be—round his corse!

[*Exit with Soldiers.*

Uril. (*starting up.*) Where are you, father?

[*Feeling about in the blindness of despair.*

Fred. How is the hour?

Uril. Heed not the moments!

Fred. (*with ghastly significance of look.*)

They are moments then!

My lips are parch'd—not even to heaven

In this dark moment can I breathe a prayer.

[*wiping his lips.*

The fierce and feverish thirst of agony—

The quenchless fire—is lit within already.

Uril. (*with a shriek of horror.*)

Moments! Oh! that my prayers could lengthen
Moments even horrible as these for ever!

Fred. (*nodding over his chains.*)

For ever! it will be for ever soon.

Death, I have met thee in the battle field—

But never felt thee terrible till now!

Uril. It wants a moment yet!

[Embracing him wildly.

The bell tolls.

(She stands stupified.)

Fred. (Calmly.) The moment's past!

(Muffled drum beats without.)

Berthold, guards, and headsman, with axe in his hand, appear in the opening in the back.— Guards bear torches.

Bert. (Coming forward.) Prisoner, your hour is come!

Uril. (with a faint scream.) Help! Adelmar!

Fred. (sternly to her) Of help, or hope, or mercy, speak no more!

They've urged me to the brink, and I stand there

Like one, who on despair calls for dark strength,

And feels his call is answer'd—Lead on!

I've trod with prouder step, but ne'er with firmer!

[Urilda, half unconscious, clings to him.

The guards, by order of Berthold, attempt to separate them.

Uril. O! let me be a daughter, whilst I may, For long I must not be!

[She attempts to employ herself about her

father. Berthold interposes with malignant irony.

Bert. Will not thy footsteps falter, gentle maid,

When they must guide a murderer to the block?

Uril. (Quite unconscious of the speaker.)

They will not—and I thank you, gentle friend ;

[Looking up, and recognizing him, with a scream.

Ah ! Berthold ! Mercy ! mercy ! dearest Berthold !

Bert. Yea—mercy brief and welcome—such swift mercy.

As yon keen axe can deal.

Uril. (wildly.) Yet, mercy ! mercy !

Mercy may dart between the hovering axe

And the cold neck it quivers o'er.

Fred. Lead on !

(Shouts at a great distance.)

Uril. (Catching the sound.) Hold !—by the fearfullest oath the lip e'er utter'd,

By desperation's agonizing hope,

Hold,—there is mercy—hope,—but not with you—

There is a voice in the air—heard you it not ?

(Rapturously.) Oh, first, my ear first caught it !

Bert. (To the guards.) To the block !

Uril. (as the tumult without increases.)

No—drag me first—my father !

[Grasping him convulsively.

Clasp ! clasp me close !

Bert. (Fiercely to the guards.)

Drag, drag them both !

[The guards approach, and seize them.

They struggle with them. She clasps Fredolfo closer.

(Shout without.) Fredolfo !

Uril. (Clinging to her father, and echoing the shout.) Fredolfo ! list !—Fredolfo, hear, and strive !

I will not from this trunk unclasp my hold !

It is not yet a corse—it shall not be !

[Struggling with them.

Rend, rend away—he is yet alive !

(Trumpets.—Shouting.)

Adelmar and his band rush in on all sides, and overpower Berthold and guards.

Adel. (Rescuing Fredolfo, and committing him to his band.) Bear him off, quick ! this breast shall guard your passage.

[Fredolfo is borne off, struggling, by Adelmar's band.

(understanding his gestures.) Leave her with me—resist not—bear him hence !

(approaching Urilda, who is fainting.) And thou—Oh ! let me save thee—droop not now,

One moment's well-waked energy—

[Urilda pursuing her father with her eyes, and then falling senseless in his arms. Adelmar

Uril. He's safe ! He's safe !

[Adelmar raises her, and is carrying her off,

when Wallenberg rushes in, and assails him.

Wall. Turn, traitor ! Villain, turn !

[Attacks him ; Adelmarr parries the blows, till finding Urilda in danger of being wounded, he is compelled to let her fall ; Berthold, watching his opportunity, catches her. Wallenberg's knights seize Adelmarr and disarm him.]

(to his knights.) Drag him hence !

[Knights force Adelmarr off the stage.]

For, oh ! I gaze upon a dearer prize ! Urilda !

Bert. Urilda—all thine own !

Uril. (recovering slowly.) Where, oh, where am I ?—There was death and blood, And a broad sea of gore,—and in it floated A father's headless corse, tossing and wreck-like, And still I plunged, and plunged, and still in blood—

At last I fell—

[Unconsciously starting at finding herself in the arms of a man.]

Ah ! monster,—is it thee ! *[shrieking.]*

[Urilda struggling to free herself, and supplicating even Wallenberg in her favour.]

Oh ! save me ! save me ! Wallenberg, protect me !

Wall. (scoffing.) What ! are those pleading arms held out to me ?

Uril. They are ! they are ! to thee — Oh, mercy ! mercy !

[Wallenberg derides her distress.]

Oh! mock me not in this fell fearful moment,
Good, — merciful, — dear Wallenberg, — Oh!
save me!

Oh! mercy! Oh! mercy!

Wall. Berthold, guard thy prize!

*[Urilda, with a dreadful shriek, bursts from
Berthold, and darting into the arms of
Wallenberg, clings to him—He bears her
off, with a fierce laugh.]*

Ay, let Fredolfo flee—since thou art here!

[Exeunt.]

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The interior of a Cavern in the Mountains, with an arch in the back ground, through which is seen a moonlight view of St. Gothard—Fredolfo discovered senseless in the arms of Waldo—Some Soldiers around him.

Wal. Nay, leave him in my arms—for he will
feel
That they are those, which have in glorious
hours
Clasp'd him in dearer duty—in the strife,
Where they have been his shield—Your hands
are cold
To the fine touch remember'd feeling lends
Even to the veteran's chill and pithless grasp.
I pray you keep from him.
1st Sol. The mountain air
Doth strongly through these cavern'd hollows
sweep ;
That will restore him.
2d Sol. Ay—and mountain shouts
Shall through their echoing arches strongly
peal ;
They will revive him.

Wal. If upon his ear
His daughter's distant voice should softly fall,
That would revive him.

Fred. (Starting up at the word.)
Daughter! said he, Daughter?—
Who hath a daughter? none—for mine is lost.
And ye, who round me stand, cannot be fathers;
Your touch is bloodless, and your eyes are stone,
Or ye would rend them out, ere they were blasted
With all that I must live, and look upon.

[A long pause of agony, then solemnly addressing them.]

Men, if ye are fathers,
Steal on your slumbering infant's holy sleep,
Gripe the weak throat, and hush the feeble cry,
And turn the cradle smile to death's dull gape;—
Their throes may palsy your unnatural touch,—
Their cry may deafen the cold ear it smites,—
But ye shall never hear the cry I hear!—
The cry of her, who on her father calls
To save her—not from death!

[Falls back exhausted.]

Wal. Press not around him, gentle friends, I pray.—

He scarcely lives—our wild and sudden flight,
Our stormy struggle with the troubled night
In the dark mountain-pass——

Fred. (bursting from them)

Hence from me, all !

Betrayers, and not friends—What have ye done?

Ye've torn me from her—torn me from my
daughter—

She shrieks—she calls on me—I hear her
voice—

So shriek'd her mother—and I hear her still—

(To a soldier) Come hither, thou—Why dost
thou shrink from me?

I know thee well—'twas on Morgarten's rock

I stood beside thy father ; with this arm

Swordless I met the blows that would have
fell'd him,

My sword being broken on the Austrians' crests.

(To another) I saved thy brother !

(To another) From the crashing rocks

I dragg'd thy kinsman, while my strained arm

Upbore the pile he writhed beneath—I saved
him—

There is not one of you that hang on me

But owes the life of father, friend, or brother—

And ye—and ye have torn me from my child !

Enter Peasants, leading Berthold forward.

Waldo (advancing). Who breaks on us,
Leading a stranger's rude forbidden step?

Fred. (recognizing him, and rushing forward)

Hold ! I know him !

The very air around him breathes of her !

The sight of aught that saw her tells of hope—
Speak!

Bert. (falling on his knees) Save her!

Fred. (trembling) May she yet be saved?

Bert. She may!

*(Fredolfo rushes into his arms, then recoils at his
marks of assumed penitent feeling.)*

Fred. I do not like thy tears — there's art in
them—

Thou wouldst with dry and burning tongue
have told

Thy breathless tale, had there been faith in
thee.

Bert. (vehemently) By every saint above—by
listening heaven—

Fred. (retreating further)

There is no truth in thee—the man that feels
[with much emphasis.]

Her holy power within him scorns an oath.

Waldo. What pledge hast thou?

Bert. I am myself my pledge.

Through the foul hurtling of the pitiless night,
Through the dark terrors of your mountain pass,
Where life was risk'd at every step, I trod—
But trod in vain, since on a father's ear
The tidings of a daughter's safety fall
Faint as a passing breeze!

Fred. (doubtingly) Stand far from me!
Let me gaze on thee at a safer distance—
How fares my daughter?

Bert. Well, if so it please
Her father she shall fare.

Fred. There is a smile,
A fiendish herald, that foreruns thy speech!
Smile not on me, but speak!

Bert. I will, and briefly.
Two hours are scarcely wanting to the dawn—
Within less space are many evils done.

Fred. (in impatient agony) Go on!

Bert. Within those hours, whose minutes fly,
Fierce Wallenberg hath sworn his father's murderer

Must to his mercy owe his forfeit life,—
Or else that forfeit, long to justice owed,
Shall at fell price be ransom'd—need I name it?
Urilda trembling waits her father's answer.

Fred. (after a long pause) Lead me to death!

Waldo, &c. (gathering round him)
Thou shalt not go—thou must not—
He doth abuse thee with a wicked tale.

Fred. (turning on them, calmly)
Know I not Wallenberg? Lead me to death!

Bert. Thou hear'st their cry—but canst not
hear thy daughter's—
Still soothing to the patriot's ear the voice
That tells of glories gone, but, oh! how thrilling
The voice that tells of honour ne'er redeem'd.

Fred. (breaking from them, and following Berthold) Lead on! I'll smite to earth the arm
that stays me!

*Enter Adelmar, on the opposite side, dishevelled
and bloody—his sword drawn.*

Adel. Hold!—hold!

Waldo and Peasants (with a shout.)

'Tis Adelmar!—

Adel. 'Tis Adelmar!

Where bends your frantic speed?

Fred. (*struggling past him*) To save Urilda!

Adel. (*with a shout, which is echoed by them all*)

She's saved! she's saved!

(*Fredolfo hangs on him, as he leans panting and
exhausted on his sword; the rest form a group;
while Berthold retreats, with a scowl of malign-
nant disappointment.*)

Bert. Curses! oh, curses on his arm of
strength!

Curses! oh, curses on his voice of joy!

Adel. (*to Fredolfo*) Hang not thus helpless on
me—blood, not tears,—(*to the rest*)

Toss not your brands in mad and reckless
triumph—

A moment saved—~~another~~ ^{a moment} lost may lose her!

I left her in the arms of Wallenberg!

Fred. (*recoiling*) Left her!

Adel. Not long I left her—this sole arm,
This spent and bleeding strength, what could
it do?

I left her to return—

Fred. (*shuddering*) Return too late!

Adel. A few—a rallied, desperate, glorious
few—

Round my rear'd arm, as round a banner, bore,
I tore her from their grasp—but, oh! too faint
And few the blows of my worn followers fell!
A shrine was near,—with these exhausted arms
I placed her by the altar of her God,
Twined her pale fingers round the pillar'd cross,
And press'd my lip to the cold hand I held;
While with bow'd knee and reeking brand I
pray'd——

Bert. (rushing forward) The prayer no saint
will hear—thou frantic boy!

Ay, gripe my throat! ay, rend me as ye will—
I know the truth—may 't burst the ears it
thrills!

I knew her arms were round the altar flung!
I knew that nought from that strong clasp could
rend her

But yon hoar head beneath her mercy bow'd!

[Pointing to Fredolfo.]

I braved the storm—I braved the mountain
wild—

I would have ruin'd—I can yet enjoy
The ruin your own hands prepare for you!
On, to the shrine! Around its rocking walls
The force of Wallenberg already thunders!
There, 'mid the heapy piles of mangled slain,
My smile in death shall mock you as in life!

Waldo and Peasants. Rend him in frag-
ments!

Fred. (solemnly interposing)

Oh! no blood be shed!

This be my high peace-offering for my crime!
This may move Heaven for mercy on my child!

Adel. Seize him with bloodless hands—but
well secure him!

Bert. (struggling as they bind him) The strong
church-gates are barr'd, but a strong arm
May burst those bars!

Adel. Villain! be dumb for ever!

Bert. (pursuing his triumph)
The shrine is high, the altar holy—ay—
But there are hands that from the trembling
cross

Have rent the victim by her locks of gold!

Adel. Curse, wretch! but speak not thus!

Bert. (bursting from them, and kneeling)
Then, hear me pray—
Hear Berthold pray, who never pray'd before!
(*Fredolfo rushes forward, while the rest drag
Berthold from his knees.*)

Fred. Take the blasphemer hence!
(*He kneels solemnly—a pause of agony—he rises.*)
I cannot pray!—But he will hear the voice .
That cannot speak! (*in tears.*)

Adel. (with emotion)
I pray not—for my choaked voice would fail!
My last, wrought strength be spent upon this
cry—
Draw every brand—flash them in Heaven's
bright eye,
And drawn, may they know no other name to
whet them

But hers for whom this single arm hath struck,
Nor, brandish'd, may they know another sheath
But Wallenberg's foul heart!

*(Loud shouts from the peasants who follow—
Adelmar turns tenderly to Fredolfo, and takes
his hand.)*

Come on, my father!

Fred. (starting from stupefaction)

Am I a father?

*(Recovering himself, and snatching a sword from
one of the peasants, and brandishing it wildly.)*

I'm a warrior yet! *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE II.

*The Shrine, splendidly adorned and illuminated.
Urilda alone, seated at the foot of the altar, which
is raised, and clinging to it.*

Uril. I am in safety here!

The lover may neglect the maid he woo'd,
The father may desert the child he loved,
But Heaven will not renounce the thing it
form'd—

The worm that twines in humble agony
Around its altar's pale!

Enter Prior, magnificently habited, with Monks.

Prior. What art thou, woman,
Who hast with wild and desperate grasp laid
hold
On our high sanctuary?—

Hast thou within thee fearful consciousness
Of crime untold, unknown? (*a pause.*)
Or, art thou conscious of some desperate deed,
Which, done by other, must by thee be told?

(*A pause.*)

Why cling'st thou trembling to the altar's rail,
Unanswering and speechless?

Uriel. I am innocent!

Mercy, O, holy father, for a wretch,
Who, by each holy thing around her, claims it!
By saint and shrine I plead,
Shelter from wild and horrid violence;
Let my life-blood bedew the altar-stone,
But tear not from its sacred hold my hands!

Monk. She is Fredolfo's daughter. Round
our walls

Thunder the forces of fierce Wallenberg,
And wilt thou risk our holy sanctuary
To shield a fugitive wanderer?

Uriel. (*quitting the shrine and falling at the
prior's feet, whose robe she holds*)

Father, save me!

Monk. If thou hast value for these holy things,
Yield thee, and part in peace!

Uriel. (*in despair, and retreating to the shrine*)
If I must yield,
It is to heaven I yield, and not to man!
For heaven will not forsake me!

Prior (*with dignity*). Nor its minister!
Behold, beneath this taper'd cross I place thee—
Let him whose brand of more than mortal might

Dare boast, against this sacred panoply
Lift his unhallow'd arm, and drop it powerless!

(Noise without increasing.)

Monk. Hark! hush thy wild boasting!—
Stern, mail'd men
Are trooping round our walls—fell Wallenberg—*(Noise increases.)*

“ They come! they come!

“ *Prior (boldly).* And let them come!

“ *Uril. (clinging to him)* My father!

“ I tremble!

“ *Prior.* Tremble not.

“ *Uril. (wildly)* The roof swims round!—
*(During this the noise increases every moment,
and Monks crowd in terror to the sanctuary.)*

“ The doors are yielding!

(Noise increases with great violence.)

“ *(Trembling with apprehension)*

“ Wilt thou abandon me?

“ *Prior.* Abandon thee!

“ If thou, indeed, in purity of soul,

“ Cling'st to the shrine, where the soul's purity

“ Alone hath claim, cling boldly, and be safe!”

*The doors give way, and Wallenberg and his
band rush in. They recoil at the entrance, till
he urges them on.*

“ *Uril. (screaming with horror, and clinging
to the Prior)*

“ Oh! hold me! hold me! Heaven forsakes me
now!”

Prior (turning to them with much dignity)
What are ye, that with desperate step dare
tread
Upon this hallow'd pavement—that dare lift
Your armed hands, where hands are raised in
prayer?

Wall. And what art thou, thou bold and im-
pious priest,
That dar'st degrade thy temple's sanctity,
And spread the fold of thy polluted vestment
Around the head of a doomed murderer's child?

Prior (menacing). Advance another step——

Wall. Advance, and seize her!

Uril. (shrieking)

Save me! oh, save me, father!

Prior (trembling). Fear them not!

Wall. (raging, as his band recoil)

Dastards and dotards, must I bid ye twice?

Uril. (struggling)

Oh, holy father! to thy robe I cling—
To thy high altar—clasp me—closer clasp me!

*Wall. (seizing her, while she still keeps a
feeble hold of the Prior)*

She's mine! she's mine!

Uril. (half torn from the Prior)

Oh! hold me!—hold me yet!

Fred. (Without.) Where is my daughter?

Uril. (Struggling convulsively.) My father
near!—O, for a moment yet!

[*Wallenberg tears Urilda from the Prior,
takes her up the steps to the altar, and*

holds her, pointing his dagger to her breast, as Fredolfo enters with his band.

Prior. (To Wallenberg menacing.) Hark! he comes!

The avenger comes! and terrible his march!

[As Fredolfo and his band enter, the Prior and Monks rush out.]

Fred. (Wildly.) Where is my child? I see her not!

[Discovering her held by the arm of Wallenberg, he retreats in horror.]

I see her!

Wall. (In triumph.) She's here! she's here!
Behold thy child!—Ay, bend and supplicate—
Bow thy hoar head in agony to earth,—
Crouch like a slave beneath the galling lash,
Writhe like a worm, that I may trample on thee,
As I do thus! *[Stamping.]*

Uril. My father!—O, my father!
Heed not his horrid words—there is a death
That all can die—the death of broken hearts—
Bow not thine honour'd head to earth for me!

*Fred. Wallenberg—foe—man whom I loathe
and fear—*
To earth I bend my trembling head before
thee! *[Kneels.]*

Wall. Cast down thy weapon!

Fred. (Throwing it from him.)
At thy feet I cast it!

Wall. Dismiss thy traitor band!

Fred. (To his band.) Away! and leave me!

Uril. (Struggling vainly while this is done.)
Father! O, father! mercy for thy child!
O, let some arrow's wing, or javelin's flight,
Be strongly aim'd to quiver in my heart!

Adelmar rushes in with a reinforcement.

Adel. What! stand ye here to parley, coward
talkers,
While in that ruffian's grasp *Urilda* writhes?
Who bears a brand, and boasts man's arm to
wield it,
Follow and save her!

Fred. Hold! or she is lost!

*[Fredolfo, in agony for his daughter's safety,
holds back Adelmar, who is now horror-
struck by her danger. Wallenberg address-
ing Adelmar, as he gazes with malignant
delight at her lover and her father, neither
of whom dare to advance.]*

Wall. (To Adelmar.) Her father bow'd to
earth beneath my feet,
And thou, her lover—for her trembling life
What wouldst thou give?

Adel. (Kneeling in agony.) My life! my soul!
my all!

Wall. (Deriding him.) Romantic prodigal—
I ask thy sword!

Uril. (Wildly.) Yield it not—yield it not—
Adelmar—my love—

Yield not our only hope—thy faithful sword!

Fred. (Supplicating Wallenberg.) Take, take
my worthless life—be mine the ransom !
(*To Urilda.*) Have mercy on thy father !—let
him die !

Adel. Spare reverend honour'd age,—spare
helpless beauty !
Do on these youthful limbs your butcher-
work—

Their strength will long defy the torture's toil !

Uril. (In distraction and struggling.) Kneel
not to him for mercy—he hath none.
(*Suddenly changing.*) I will beneath thy feet
fling my crush'd heart—

[*Dreading the danger of Fredolfo and Adelmar.*
I will be thine, I'll love thee—worship thee !

Adel. (Starting up.) His ! his ! that word hath
wither'd up my heart !

[*Kneeling, and offering his sword.*
Here ! take my sword !

Wall. (Stabbing him with it as he kneels.)
I do—and—thus I use it !

[*Adelmar falls ; Wallenberg releases Urilda,
pointing with a dreadful smile to his pro-
strate body. Fredolfo, overcome with hor-
ror, shrinks back, and hides his head in
his mantle for a few moments. Urilda falls
beside Adelmar, then turns to Wallenberg.*

Uril. Devil ! O, devil ! not one stab for me—
I do not pray—I ask no mercy now !

[*Adelmar, half raising himself, fixes his eyes
on her.*

Ah! still he lives! and while there's life, I hope!

[*Turning distractedly to Wallenberg.*
Mercy—dear Wallenberg—kind Wallenberg!

[*Adelmar expires.*
(*Starting up.*) Life is no more—nor is there mercy now.

I kneel no more—I curse thee to thy face!

[*Dashing herself deliriously beside the body of Adelmar. Fredolfo recovering himself, and rushing on Wallenberg, who stands in malignant stupefaction at the spectacle of Urilda's despair.*

Fred. Villain! let Vengeance pay her triple debt!

This for the sire—the mother—and the child!

[*After a short conflict, he thrice wounds Wallenberg, who falls against the altar, pointing to Urilda. Fredolfo views him as he falls with a look of dreadful triumph.*

Wall. (*Struggling to raise himself.*)

Thine eyes look curses at me, though thou speak'st not—

Those curses are my parting soul's rich benison—

'Tis all I ask!

[*Recovering some strength, rising, and grasping the arm of Urilda, whom he flings towards her father, a paralyzed and frozen object.*

Ha! this is better still!

Thou seek'st thy daughter—take her from my hand!

[He flings her into the arms of her father, falls, and expires with a laugh. Fred. rushes to her.]

Fred. My child! my child! is it my child I clasp?

What ghastly thing art thou, with lightless eye,
That starest on me in stone! if thou hast life,
I do adjure thee, speak!—Save me from madness!

Urilda! daughter! speak!

Uril. *(Slowly recovering.)* What voice is that?
I deem'd that it was past—but still I'm here—
Chain'd down in torture—struggling with a fiend!—

[Pushing away her father.]

Avaunt! thy touch is fire—my veins are scorched!

I blaze!—I blaze!—stand off!—pour rivers o'er me!

[Shrieking.]

Ah! with hot gore ye drench me—I'm o'erwhelm'd!

A sea of blood!—down, down, amid the billows!

Down, down for ever!—rest is at the bottom!

[Fredolfo sinks into the arms of Waldo, Urilda staggers feebly towards the body of Adelmor, and sinks down beside it.]

Father! you knew him—would you know him now?

[Staggers to her father.]

There is a band around my brain and heart !
A burning cord !—Can you unloose it, father ?
It bursts, it bursts !—'tis a sweet agony !
They thought to part us — this hath baffled
them !

Mine, mine—for ever mine !—See how I smile !

*[Falls on the body of Adelmarr, and expires
slowly, forcing a smile as she sees her fa-
ther's agony.]*

THE END.

a sad affair - July 10.

EPILOGUE,

By A. A. WATTS, Esq.

SPOKEN BY MISS BRUNTON.

[*Speaks as entering.*]

Now for *my* part!—nay, frown not on me so :
 Good, gentle critic, smooth that ruffled brow ;
 Prithee, the lightning of your wrath delay
 Until you've heard the little *I've* to say !

A few years since—the fashion is gone by
 Like many others, though we know not why—
 The TRAGIC MUSE, I'm told, was judged by rules
 From Nature drawn, not gathered from the schools ;
 And if she touched the heart had nought to fear
 From the fool's scoff, or pedant's look severe.
 Our censors now a different mode pursue,
 Nor always yield the laurel wreath where due ;
 Some,—with bent brows and most portentous faces,
 Spy out defects the author meant as graces,
 “ And quick condemn, without one qualm of conscience,
 “ Each daring thought as most egregious nonsense ;”
 Heedless the while, amid their work of slaughter,
 That the best pearls lie in the deepest water !
 “ Fain would they stay all genius in its flight,
 “ Because it soars above and mocks their sight ;
 “ The loftiest energies of mind restrain
 “ 'Neath the dark link of caution's chilling chain,—
 “ And, owl-like, seek to blot the orb of day,
 “ Because *their* eyes are dazzled by its ray.”
 Others there are, so partial to a joke,
 That sober reason seems to them a yoke ;

And so to ease it, and produce a hit,
They make the bard—a whetstone to their wit!
True or untrue—no matter—they must say
A few *smart* things about him and his play;
For 'twould be hard if they for candour's sake
Must balk *impromptus*—it took weeks to make!
Thus hath our poet dangers twain to shun,
His Scylla ignorance,—his Charybdis fun;—
Yet, well assured that there are many here
From whose just judgment he has nought to fear,—
In whom, with knowledge and a taste refined,
Heaven's choicest gift! a noble heart, is join'd;—
And all encouraged by the tears and sighs
Vouchsafed from yon fair bosoms and bright eyes;
So that he 'scape the swell of that dark ocean—
That sea of heads, e'en now in fearful motion,—
To-morrow night he will respread his sail
(Grant ye, kind destinies, a favoring gale)
With talismanic art revive the slain,
And dare the ROCK and WHIRLPOOL o'er again.

The lines with inverted commas were omitted in the delivery.

Speedily will be published, by the same Author,

T A L E S.

FOUR VOLUMES, DUODECIMO.

Printed by Thomas Davison, Whitefriars, London.

MANUEL;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS:

AS PERFORMED AT

THE THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF BERTRAM.

Charles N. Merwin.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

1817.

Price 4s. 6d.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MANUEL, COUNT VALDI Mr. KEAN.
DE ZELOS, his Kinsman Mr. RAE.
TORRISMOND, De Zelos' Son Mr. WALLACK.
MONCALDE, a Monk Mr. BENGOUGH.
MENDIZABEL.. } { Mr. HOLLAND.
VELASCO } Nobles of Cordova { Mr. COVENEY.
TORRALVA } { Mr. KENT.
PEREZ, a Servant..... Mr. BARNARD.
GUIDE Mr. POWEL.
ALMORAD, a Moor..... Mr. J. P. COOKE.
VICTORIA, Daughter to Don Mannel.. Miss SOMERVILLE.
XIMENA, Daughter to De Zelos..... Mrs. KNIGHT.

Attendants, &c.

SCENE—Cordova, afterwards Almunecar.

TIME—*After the Battle of Tolosa, in which the Spaniards defeated the Moors in the neighbourhood of Cordova.*

. The Lines distinguished by inverted commas, are omitted in the Representation.

TO
WALTER SCOTT, ESQ.

This Tragedy

IS

DEDICATED

BY

THE AUTHOR.

Primâ dicte mihi, summâ dicende Camœnâ

—— quod spiro et placeo (si placeo) tuum est.

Just published,
A SEVENTH EDITION of BERTRAM ; or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand : a Tragedy.

BY THE REV. R. C. MATURIN.

P R E F A C E.

OF my first dramatic attempt so little notice was taken by Reviewers, that I was deprived of those opportunities of improvement, of which, I hope, I should have been willing to avail myself.

An Author can scarcely be expected to correct faults which are not pointed out to him, and which, perhaps, he will be slow in discovering for himself.

One objection indeed reached me:—it was said that Bertram drew no tears. The answer is obvious,—the subject did not admit of it. Would it not be reckoned an irrelevant criticism to say, that no one weeps for Macbeth or Richard?

Against the alleged immoral tendency of Bertram, I must try to defend myself. If Tragedy is not allowed to exhibit crimes and passions, what is left for her to exhibit?—If

crime is attended with punishment as its consequence, I conceive the interests of morality are not compromised; and that delicacy seems rather fastidious which shrinks from the exposure of a crime, which is, perhaps, more than many others, degrading to a nation, and destructive of the peace and order of society.

I now willingly cease writing about myself, and turn to a more grateful subject—to Lord BYRON, and the Committee of Drury-lane Theatre. I rejoice in taking the first opportunity allowed me to offer my acknowledgments for the liberality which condescended to recognise the claims of an obscure stranger. To the Rev. Dr. WEBB, of Dublin, one of my brother-curates, my thanks are eminently due for the use of his valuable library, accorded to me with that politeness which distinguishes its highly-respectable possessor.

PROLOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MR. S. PENLEY.

THE Bard, who, till your favour grac'd his name,
And cheer'd his outset on the path to fame,
With unrewarded zeal had toil'd to use
The fancied favour of the serious Muse,
A vent'rous suppliant, dares again address
The friends, whose plaudits were his first success.

Should, then, his tragic numbers please no more,
(Who may not fail, where JOHNSON fail'd before ?)
Forbear harsh blame, nor deem *yourselves* exempt,—
Your kindness lur'd him to the rash attempt.
But should (more grateful thought!) his plaintive tale
Wake the soft tear, and o'er the heart prevail,
From self-approving breasts your praise will burst,
To hail the genius that yourselves have nurst.

When the high deeds, long lost in time's expanse,
Of Moor and Spaniard realiz'd romance,
Your Bard has fabled his sad scene, to shew
A maiden's constancy and father's woe.
From Erin, sister Isle ! he trembling sends
His vent'rous off'ring to his British friends ;
Nor envious scoff nor party feud we fear,
To mar the welcome of the stranger here.

MANUEL.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Night—a Street in the City of Cordova—a Gothic gate in the back ground. A Monastery illuminated.

Hymn by the Monks.

CITY, deliver'd from the sword,
Arise, and call upon the Lord !
Lift up in praise thy midnight voice;
Rejoice, thou rescued city, rejoice !
God chose no arm of mortal might,
He chose no name of glorious fame ;
A *David* smote their giant strength,
A *stripling* brought their hosts to shame.

[Sound of rejoicing without.]

Enter Perez and Moncalde.

MON. Who is this *youth*—this *stripling* ?—Can it be ?—

PER. Oh, welcome, father, in this hour of joy!

MON. And welcome thou, for I have much to ask :
These midnight voices tell a wond'rous tale
Of Spain deliver'd, and the Moors o'erthrown.
But, who has wrought this thing?

PER. Who but Alonzo?
Aye, our Alonzo—our young warrior—
Our Lord Don Manuel's son.

MON. All-powerful Heav'n
Who to the task that splits the trenchant blade
Dost whet th' unapt and edgeless instrument—
Who by a stripling's arm deliv'rance wrought
Where manhood vailed its might !—Nay, tell me all—
From lone and distant pilgrimage I come,
And was from slumber startled by the shouts
That heralded your tidings——

PER. Hear it, Spain!
Rescued Cordova, hear!—From Montiel's field
To Guadalquiver's mouth, by east and west
The Moor hath left the land, or stays to spread
The mountain-eagle's feast.—My native river,
Upon thy beautiful banks no swarthy brow
Uprears the turban-fold—no wild lelille
Makes answer to the gong and atabal—
And on the minaret the voice is still
That by pale twilight call'd to pray'r unholy
The misbelieving race!

MON. Praise ye the saints!
I am the ancient beadsman of his house,
And well remember with how many a pray'r

I bless'd his girded sword, and bid his arm
Gripe with unfailing might the crosletted shield
Against the foeman's dint.

PER. Aye, father, such were easy ministry ;—
I am the ancient vassal of his house,
And well remember with how proud a grasp
(While death rode harbinger) I bore his banner
High in the van of chivalry, when first
The youthful knight to battle rode——

MON. Enough, my son!—Yet well I love thy zeal :
Where dost thou hasten now ?

PER. I haste to cheer
Our ancient lord with his Alonzo's fame.
Oh, how he will fling back his aged locks,
And lift his eye, and lock his wither'd hands,
And, with the step and impulse of his youth,
Tread proudly in his halls.

MON. He loves him as no earthly thing should be,
In the scale of duty, lov'd—makes him a god
Shrined in his heart, and does him worship there—
And though all noble, lovely, honor'd qualities
Do grace the youth, yet, where to such is paid
The homage that diviner things do claim,
'Tis proud and fond idolatry.

PER. Farewell!
Or will you journey onward in our company ?

MON. I have *vows to pay*, and beads to tell—and
here,
Within this city, gifted shrines there are
Mine orisons are vowed to ;—yet I trust

These sandal'd footsteps, imp'd by joyful duty,
May yet o'ertake the march of mailed feet.

PER. We'll do your greetings.

MON. Look, Perez, there is one, who of our joy
Is not susceptible or participant :—

That is De Zelos, kinsman to Don Manuel—
Long deem'd successor to his ample honors.
For many years without an heir he liv'd ;
Alonzo's birth restor'd the father's hopes,
And crush'd the kinsman's.

Needy he lives, neglected by Don Manuel,
Who, in his idolized son, almost forgets
That human beings tread the earth.

PER. I've heard he hates his kinsman's prosp'rous
house ;

Is it in man to hate the young Alonzo ?

MON. Oh, sir, to needy men
The triumphs of the prosperous are crimes.

PER. See how he strides and shoulders through the
crowd,

Wrapping in jealous folds his scanty cloak,
As if a touch i' th' press pollution were
To his proud vesture's hem.—Aye, now he eyes us
With look of mute and sullen scorn, and smile,
Wrinkling his hollow cheek in mockery
At our glad burst of triumph. In good faith,
I'll ring a peal in his proud ear shall stun it.

[*Exeunt. Shouts without.*]

Enter De Zelos, looking back.

Aye, shout, ye senseless crowd ! torment the air !
Who but Alonzo ? Nothing but Alonzo !
The very storks upon your steeple-tops
Do make more seemly clatter.
I have come forth, not that I love the light,
But that the broad beams of the laughing sun,
Which seem to mock the *wretchedness* they shine on,
Are yet less hateful than *its* sight at home.
The bed not form'd for rest—the untrimm'd hearth,
Where fire ne'er glows—the walls undeck'd by
 hanging,
Save what the spider weaves—the heedless lacquey,
Whose muttering service, half a threat, half insult,
The needy master dares not hear !—Oh, this—
This household hell to shun, I'd walk unhail'd—
Their foolery, bell-peal, and trumpet-bray,
I'd bear—aye, bear to hear Alonzo's praise !

Enter Mendizabel, the Justiza, with his train.

DE ZEL. Good day.

MEN. Good day. (*carelessly, and exit.*)

(*De Zelos bows to the attendants, who scarce
note him.*)

DE ZEL. No more !—Well, be it so.
Ye insects in my heat that basked and buzzed,
And sung your summer-songs of flattery,

But, parting, leave your stings.—They're gone,—all gone!

How desolate the poor man's path is left!

Oh! where's the spectre like grim Poverty,
Whose with'ring shade at height of noon can scare
The populous street, making its way a desert;
And leave the gaunt and lonely form to watch
The echo of his own sad steps?
Shall it be always thus?

Enter Torrismond.

DE ZEL. Now, sir, what do you here?

TORRIS. 'Tis your will, sir,
I should do nothing, and should nothing be—
I am an idle, worthless, gazer here;
An empty shouter in the pageant's train,
Who should have led its van.

DE ZEL. You wrong yourself, brave sir, you're
here in place,
Train-bearer in your kinsman's pageantry;
Pointing with finger prompt, and patient office,
To its proud blazonry; and haply deeming,
As men who do some pompous ~~palace~~ ~~show~~,
That parting Wonder will requite ~~thee well~~.
With—"Here, good fellow, for thy pains!"

TORRIS. Are you my father? Look at this un-
tried arm:
Shame that its waving only cleaves the air,
And not the Moslem turban! Feel this breast:
It beats with anguish, yea, with agony,

Thou'dst bare the aching wound : it, passing, galls;
 Then whistles by regardless.—We are poor—
 Then let us hide it; for it is the crime
 That men do loath.—Let me sit down in solitude,
 Shunning and shunn'd—Let no man pass my door,
 Or tread the grass Neglect hath planted there—
 No prying eye o'erlook my scanty meal—
 No hand uplift my latch, to greet or mock me;—
 And, when I die, o'er my unburied corse
 My lank and pitiful dog the requiem howl—
 For Monks, unpaid, won't chant it.—See thy lot—
 Bend thy proud soul to it—unless—perchance—

TORRIS. Said you—unless?—

DE ZEL. I did not speak to thee ;
 —Or, if I did, thou wast unwise to mark me—
 For, from the mind by moody passion stirr'd,
 Strange sounds break forth the will doth claim no
 share in,

And Memory dares not own.—How now, Ximena—

Enter Ximena, veiled, as from church.

Wearying the saints for young Alonzo's safety?—

Why should the poor rejoice?—

They have no country : it is Mockery's voice
 Bids them rejoice, and gives them nought to joy in.—
 But 'tis the age's foppery, and the beggar
 Lights his last faggot for his country's glory—
 Forgetting, while he eyes the straw-fed blaze,
 He must be cold to-morrow !

TORRIS. Oh, how the cursed selfishness of want

[Aside.

Dries up each spring Nature hath open'd in us !

XIM. My sire would chide,
Thought his Ximena thus.

But tell me, is the young Alonzo safe?—

DE ZEL. What boots it thee to know?—Go, ply
thy distaff—

Thy weeds are thin and rent—'twill better suit thee.

XIM. I ask but is Alonzo safe—

DE ZEL. Alonzo!

How's this? That name again!—What dost thou mean?

Come hither, girl; shrink not, but listen to me:—

In Fate's dark quiver there doth lurk no dart,

Barbed and triple-edg'd with want, shame, scorn,

But I would rather bear its keenest rankling

Than meet that thought even in my dreams.—*No ;
hate him ;*

That may be for thy peace.

*[Ximena falls weeping into the arms
of Torrismond.]*

Enter a Messenger.

MES. My lord, Don Manuel greets his kinsmen well,
And bids them to a feast he holds to-night,
In honor of his brave son's victory.

TORRIS. By heaven, I'll hail him with a brother's
love!

Hath the young warrior reached his father's halls?

MES. He trusts to win them by the setting sun.

DE ZEL. (*Aside.*) An' if he do——

MES. Your answer, sir; so please you—

DE ZEL. Sir, we will go—and therefore will we go
That the chill aspect of his needy kinsmen
May add a zest to his luxurious banquet—
As revellers crown their summer-cups with ice,
To make the draught delicious.—Sir we'll go.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Yes, we will go, and shame him in these vestments.
And canst thou, Torrismond, where gallants brave
Their jewell'd barrets bear, rear thy dark locks
Without a blush, in Nature's negligence?

TORRIS. I go to greet a warrior, not a *Galliard*.

DE ZEL. And thou, Ximena, art *thou* too divested
Of all that to thy sex's bosom clings?
Canst thou in those poor weeds?—No, go, make suit
To proud Victoria, that her humblest handmaid
Will, of her grace, accord thee meet adornments
To take a lute, and mix among her minstrels.

XIM. Oh, speak not thus of that most gentle
maid.

TORRIS. By heaven, my father, you do wrong
Victoria.

DE ZEL. What! thou, too—madman?—

XIM. Wring not your daughter's heart; she is your
child,

And shames not by her father's side to stand
In weeds that suit his state.

DE ZEL.

Away! away!

The spirit's wound doth never fester more
Than when the helpless, but officious, hand
Tures it with vain soothings.—

Was it not told me, when my hasty mood
Slighted thy tale last night, how the late storm
Wrench'd from its fair and fertile bed a pine,
And flung it in a low unsightly bottom?
Chance-rooted there, the stranger-branches wave,
And nod in uncouth beauty.—Was't not so?—

XIM. It was, my lord.

DE ZEL. Why, then, such things may be.
Come, to the feast—Away! [Exeunt.

SCENE II.

*A passage in the Castle of Don Manuel. Servants
with lights passing along.*

1st SER. More lights, more lights, the guests are
hastening in!

Our lord, Don Manuel, will receive his son
In yon pavilion.

2d SER. Wherefore comes he not?

'Tis wondrous late.—

1st SER. Nay, never heed thou that.
On such a night of joy—

2d SER. The night grows murky—
How soon the lovely evening was o'ercast!

1st SER. What boots it thee to mark the gloomy
night?

Go, bear those torches swiftly to the garden,
And bid the minstrels haste. [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

A sumptuous Pavilion in the Gardens, through arches in the back ground—A view of the Gardens lit up, with groups of Company—A strain of cheerful Music—Manuel, Victoria, and Guests, splendidly dressed, discovered—Manuel conversing.

MAN. No, no, not *many* evenings, gen'rous friends;
Not many such as this—Life grants them not—
There is a thick oppression on my heart—
A fulness here—I know not how to name it.—
Joy comes to us a splendid, hurrying, stranger;
And, ere we feel him welcome Joy, is gone—
But Grief appears a dull and daily guest,
Who near us long his wonted seat has taken,
Till that his heaviness no burden seems.

VICT. Greet not our noble happy guests, my father,
With such unjoyous sounds.

MAN. Thou dost remind me—
Aye—Speak we of Tolosa—Is't not thus
The field is nam'd where my Alonzo fought?

VICT. It is, my lord.

MAN. Why, then, we'll talk of it.

(Enter De Zelos, Torrismond, and Ximena.)

MAN. Kinsman, I greet you well. *(Carelessly.)*

(Victoria goes to them, and appears to make amends for their cold reception by others.)

MAN. Nay, is there not
A heavy, sultry, faintness in the night?

1st GUEST. A lovelier sun-set never lit your towers.

MAN. I mark'd it too—Did you not mark it,
friends?

I saw the setting sun go glorious down
'Mid clouds of form and hue inimitable—
Like some high chieftain in his victor-tent
O'er-canopied with glory—with his train
Of floating banners crimson-hued, and plumes
Tinted with gorgeous colouring—blazonry
Of hand divine!—

But round his sinking orb a dark cloud hung—
A sable speck malignant—through whose shade
All the fair pageantry of lights and hues
An ominous and gloomy lustre shed.

GUESTS. We mark'd it not.

MAN. Was it not wond'rous strange?

VICT. Good Perez, rouse thy master with some tale
Of my brave brother's deeds.—
His spirit will kindle at the stirring theme,
As starts the slumb'ring warrior from his dream
At the far trumpet's sound.

TOR. Nay, let us hear some of his own high deeds.
I love to hear an ancient warrior's tale,
When stirred by recent glory.

MAN. Aye, many things come thronging to my
brain

Feverish and troubled, but they make me feel

I was a warrior once.

Heard ye the tale of Osma? Sword of Heaven,

Thou'st put on strength as in the ancient days—

Days of the deeds of old!—

Night hung on van and rear : we moved in darkness,

And heavily did count our echoed steps :

As men who marched to death!—Osma, thy field

(When the pale morn broke on the battle's verge)

Seemed as an ocean, where the Moorish turbans

Toss'd like the white sea-foam! Amid that ocean

We were to plunge and—perish!—

For ev'ry lance we couch'd the Moslem host

Drew twenty scimitars—and, when the cry

“ God and St. Jago!” burst from our pale lips,

Seem'd as if every Spanish soldier peal'd

His requiem, not his battle-shout!—Oh Sirs!

We stood not then on terms of war,—devices

To give the coward the cold praise of art :—

We fought with life and soul upon the issue,—

With sword (once drawn) whose battle knew no end,—

With hand, that, wedded to the faithful hilt,

Knew no divorce but death, and held it *then*

With grasp which death unlocks not!—

We charg'd beneath their javelins' iron show'r,

Clashed cymbal, sabre-gleam, and banner's float,

That hid the light between!—We charged in blood,

And left our trampling steeds to tread out lives

That foil'd our blunted swords!—We charged in death;
Flung life away, as an incumb'ring garment;
And, like the *Greek*, grappled with glory *naked*!
'Twas noon,—when, like a mountain earthquake-shook,
I saw their battle reel.

Then waned the troubled Crescent, while aloft,
Banner'd in chivalrous display, the Cross,
Like meteor, flew and blaz'd!—Miramolin,
Like the proud leader of the evil host,
The first in stature, glory, and despair,
Still trod the edge of battle—still his sword
Swept with resistless range where thickest fell
The bloody harvest round!—"Miramolin—
"Turn, turn," I cried!—" 'tis Manuel calls."—

[Falls back exhausted.]

Oh! I had voice to hush the battle *then*,
But have not voice to tell it now!—

VIC. Nay, cease—

It shakes his feeble frame—*forbear, my father!*—

MAN. (*Starting up vehemently, and describing
by gestures.*)

I smote him with the lance—with this hand smote
him—

This trembling hand—whose wither'd joints but
serve

To bless Alonzo now—

*[Victoria offers Manuel a cup of wine. As
he is tasting, a horn is heard.]*

MAN. I need no cordial—'tis Alonzo's horn.

Alonzo's Page enters, bearing his Banner.

MAN. Where is my son?

PAGE. Is he not here already?—

Through the dark wood he took his way for speed,
Dismiss'd his weary train, and, all unguarded,
Pursued his path alone.

VIC. The wood?—Oh, Heaven!—

MEND. It is a fearful, lonely place; and there
Have murders oft been done.

MAN. Away, ye slaves! bear torches, skirt the
forest—

Pursue the track like blood-hounds—make its dark-
ness

As bright as summer noon.

MEND. Accept my services. [*Exeunt Guests,
(Armed Vassals with torches seen crossing the
Garden.)*]

MAN. To go alone—Oh, madness, madness!—

VIC. Fear not—

For you shall quickly feel him in your arms.

MAN. Shall I? [*A long pause.*]

By Heaven, I hear his courser's tread—

The matchless steed I gave him!—I could swear
To every foot-tramp.—

VIC. Hark!—

XIM. Hark!—

[*Manuel attempts to move, but is unable.*]

TOR. (*returning slowly.*)

It is his war-steed, but—he comes alone!

VIC. (*to Manuel.*)

Nay, look not thus; thou know'st it is his wont

On foot to scale the green and pleasant slope

That to the portal leads.—

MAN. (*starting*) And so it is—

TOR. (*faintly*)

There is a stain of blood upon the saddle—

VIC. It is the foeman's blood—think'st thou not
so?—

TOR. A broken lance is trailing from the stirrup—

MAN. (*rushing out*)

That lance he never quitted but with life—

Away, away!—

VIC. Oh, hold!—The night is dread,
And fierce and foul the storm comes sweeping on.

MAN. (*with a frantic laugh*)

The storm—ha, ha, ha!—'Tis here, and here—

[*striking his head—Exit.*]

VIC. Fly, Torrismond, and guard him.

[*Exit Torrismond.*]

Victoria and Ximena sink into each other's arm.

VIC. Oh Heaven!—oh, what a night! oh, speak,
Ximena,

One word of comfort or of hope!

XIM. I cannot.

[*Manuel is brought back senseless in
the arms of De Zelds and the ser-
vants; Torrismond following.*]

TOR. His broken helm bloody, and soil'd with
clay—

(*Drawing his sword vehemently.*)

Oh, if on earth the murderer can be found!—

[*At these words Manuel starts from
their arms, and stands pointing
with a terrible look at De Zelos.*]

MAN. There!—

[*The curtain drops.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*The Gardens of Manuel's Castle—a clouded Moon—
a part of the Castle seen on one side of the Garden.
Torrismond enters much agitated, after an unsuccessful search.*

TOR. **HOPELESS** and desperate—no trace, no sound !—

The forest hath no voice—the giant trees
Stand in mute loneliness—and, when the wind
Sweeps their dark branches, 'tis like mockery
Of the long loud cries that vainly pierced their darkness.

The storm hath ceased—a deep unnatural stillness
Sits brooding on the night, like a stern soul
Jealous of its foul secret—

Break (in thy troubled beauty) forth, O Moon !
And shed thy cold light on my throbbing brow.
Thy wan and sunken gleam, that with the clouds
Holds a dubious conflict, to my fancy pictures
Hope striving with Despair !—

Victoria enters.

VIC. Who wanders there at this late hour?
Oh Torrismond, canst *thou* not speak of hope?
All are return'd, and all brought back despair!
'Twas desolate to hear the heavy steps
That on the echoing draw-bridge rung the knell
Of list'ning Hope, that turn'd, and met Despair.
Their footsteps had a voice, and in mine ear
Told what voice could not utter—but still thou camest
not—

My last hope clung to thee—

TOR. ————All hope hath fail'd—

VIC. Was there no sound amid the forest's darkness?

Was there no trace along the river's verge?
Oh God! had I been there, and a sad sister,
Like me, had sought in anguish for a brother,
I would have dug earth's core, scoop'd rivers' beds,
Till I could say, He's here!—

TOR. There is no hope—

VIC. Oh! Hope will long abide, and hardly part
When that its mansion is a sister's bosom.
There have been those who in their infant years
Were lost, and parents in their agony
Would have giv'n worlds to weep upon their graves
The tears they shed on air!—Yet such were found;
And must not he—a youth in manhood's prime?
Ten thousand thoughts, that, but an hour o'erpast,
Would have struck daggers through a soul at ease,
Seem to its mis'ry like a blessing now.
He might have wander'd in the forest's maze—

He might in some lone mansion have found shelter :
Speak not to me, unless thou think'st like me !

TOR. I think—I dare not think—Where is thy
father ?

VIC. He hath just sunk into a fearful slumber—

TOR. Oh that such slumber, fearful as it is—
Broke by dark dreams and horrible imagery—
Would steep my senses too!—

VIC. See where morning dawns !
And morning ever to the eyes of wretches
Smiles as it brought good tidings in its smile.

TOR. Hope for us both, Victoria ! cling to it,
For I have none.

VIC. Dost thou speak darkly too ?
Thy look is like thy father's !—Torrismond,
Terror and doubt are on me——

TOR. Stop, Victoria !
If the free wind did dare to whisper *that*,
I'd tell it, in the face of Heav'n, it lied.
Art thou so wretched in thy soul, Victoria,
And canst not feel for one more wretched still ?
Guilt's conscious smile might envy Misery's tear.

VIC. Oh, Misery feels no suffering but its own,
Or I had marked thy pale brow, and the drops
That weariness wrung from it.

TOR. 'Twas not weariness—
—No matter what—my soul seems changed within me.
Is this the spot where last we met, Victoria ?
Is this the light by which I last beheld thee ?
Love with that beautiful light held harmony :

The very beam that shows thee sadly *now*
 Glow'd on the paradise of meeting lovers.
 We wander'd through these faint and flecker'd shades,
 Like spirits in Elysium!—Was it a dream?

VIC. Oh, talk not thus; all lighter feelings seem
 A crime at this stern hour.
 Despair and darkness are around us! We must part;
 Like those whose parting hath no hope—hark! hark!

(*Horn within.*)

Perchance some tidings—hark! my father's summons,
 And I have nought to bring him but—despair!

[*Exit.*]

TOR. (*in gloomy meditation.*)
 Can I not follow her?—I'm innocent:
 Why should I shun the old man's fixed eye?
 Thou serpent thought, whose dammed sting is *here*,
 I'll rend thee forth, or with thee rend my heart.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE II.

*An Apartment in the Castle. Manuel surrounded by
 the Guests.*

MAN. And is he come?—Why doth he linger thus?
 Who are those near me?

Stand back, stand back; ye keep me from his sight.

[*Recollecting himself, and falling back.*]

Be dumb!—I know it all— [In a gentler tone.

My child, Victoria; mine own, *only* child,

Come hither to me ; fear not, answer truly.
Was it not all a dream ?—the horrible night—
Nay, do not mock thy old unhappy father—
In faith, I am past mocking. See these tears.

VIC. (*after a long struggle.*) I cannot speak to thee.

MAN. Thy silence speaks.
Are all the messengers return'd ?

MEND. They are.

MAN. All ?

MEND. All.

MAN. How prompt thou art to echo grief !

VIC. Moncalde is not yet returned ; perhaps—

MAN. Aye, thou say'st well, *perhaps*—I am a fool,
For I had hope when came the first full swiftly,
And now I hope because the last doth linger.

MEND. All means that human agents could employ
Have been at work. The country is aroused ;
The knights in armour guard the skirted forest :
Nor briery dell, nor tufted thicket there,
But by a hundred lances hath been searched.

MAN. Nay, speak not with such horrible certitude:
Give me a hope there is some spot unsearch'd,—
Some dark, unthought-of spot—it *must* be so !

MEND. Doubt not our faith or courage.

MAN. Ha, ha, ha !—
Oh that you were the veriest shrinking cravens,
Rather than he were lost !—

VIC. Gentle, my father !

Cast not such shame upon your noble friends,
Who traced, at risk of life, the forest's darkness.

MAN. Aye! did they so?—why then (but be *it*
secret)

I have a way to find him—I have thought on't.
Come near, my Lord Mendizabel—nay, nearer.
Let none but fathers search—they must prevail—
And yet he was a father who did this.—

VIC. Hush, hush, those dreadful sounds!—Oh,
think not thus!

MEND. Speak not so felly of your kinsman.

MAN.

Lord,

I am not mad—not yet—I am not mad—
I say, I swear, i' th' sight of awful Heaven,
If my Alonzo—if indeed—I cannot—
De Zelos is his murderer!—

VIC.

Horrible! horrible!

Perez rushes in.

PER.

Moncalde is returning.

MAN. (*vehemently*) I do retract—I do believe him
innocent.

God grant him innocent! (*All turn to the door.*)

(*A long pause.*)

VIC. (*very reluctantly*) He comes—like one whose
footing Hope supports not.

MAN. (*wildly*) 'Tis false! 'tis false! he steps right
joyfully,

Like one who, to a desp'rate father's ear,
Brings tidings of his son.—Oh, welcome, welcome!

Enter Moncalde.

Thou comest with equal tread—It cannot be ;
Thy message is despair.—

MONC. Hope is in Heaven:
On earth I know of none.

MAN. Mine head reels round.
Is this Moncalde? this the last sole plank
I grasp'd in my despair, and called it Life?—
Oh, I am wrecked by th' shore!—

Vic. (*Moncalde going to speak.*) Hold!—yet, my father—

MONC. There is a wild report—A peasant boy
Heard cries of murder in the midnight wood.—

MAN. Where is he?
Heard he the cries of murder?
Did he not hear De Zelos' name?—

MONC. I know not.
 "But see! he comes to tell."

"Enter Peasant, held by Manuel's vassals.

“MAN. Come hither—Tremble not.—What hast
“thou seen?

“ PEA. Where the dark forest overhangs the river;
“ Just at the twilight hour—

"MAN. The very hour—

“ PEA. I heard such fearful cries — such blood-
“ choak’d moans—

"MAN. Was it Alonzo's voice?"

"PEA. My noble lord,
"I never heard his voice.

“ MAN. Oh, that thou hadst not!—
“ Did he not call on me, call on his father?—
“ I ask thee, was't Alonzo's cry?—
“ VIC. He knows not.
“ MAN. Impossible! It had that blessed sound,
“ Whose language strikes upon the human heart,
“ And, ere he spoke his name, men felt they knew
“ him.

MONC. (*looking out*) De Zelos comes.

MAN. What! hath he slain, and comes to take
possession?
Off! I will see him. Will he dare to meet me?

Enter De Zelos.

Here, here I am!—Aye, look me dead! I'm old,
Feeble, and spent—I am scarce worth a murder—
But 'twas a baser blow that stabbed Alonzo.

DE ZEL. (*appealing to the guests of Mendizabel*)
Grave lords, you hear my injuries:—this old lord,
In fierce and uncheck'd malice, loads my name
With infamy too foul to bear, were't not
Too weak for babbling childhood to believe.
Aye, even last night, when, strongly touched with pity,
I raised his sinking frame, he shrunk from mine,
As from a serpent's touch.

MAN. And so it was.

DE ZEL. If this be but the impotent rage of grief,
Whose phrensy, like the scorpion's, wounds itself,
I pardon it.

MAN. *Thou pardon me? [Great agony.*

VIC. For shame! for mercy, hence;
It is not noble, manly; 'tis not human
To press upon a mourner's wretchedness.

DE ZEL. 'Tis true, fair dame, and wise as it is
true:

De Zelos must resign his honor's care
Because a lady weeps.

VIC. Oh, take him hence.

MAN. He shall not go.
De Zelos, I arraign thee here of murder,
In sight of Heaven, and of this land. Justiza
Mendizabel, dispenser of our laws,
I call on thy grave office for redress
And means, and leave and laws; to urge my cause
Before th' assembled council of the land.

DE ZEL. Away! I fling thy false and foolish
slanders
From my clear name as lightly as I shake
Thy worthless weight from my disburthened arm.

[Flinging him off.]

MEND. You have appealed to law, deluded lord!
To-morrow, in our solemn halls of justice,
Th' accuser and th' accused shall both appear.
Till then, my lord, you'll be my guest, not prisoner.

DE ZEL. My noble lord, I thank your courtesy.
Oh wealth, already how thy magic works! *[aside.]*
'Tis Valdi's future heir he greets as guest.

MEND. My office binds me to these irksome forms;
But, ere they are fulfilled, I first would try

If that your kinsman with such desperate fierceness
Will urge this hopeless charge.

Don Manuel, think on this unnatural conflict—
Think of the weakness of this hollow cause—
Think of your noble kinsman's spotless name !—

MAN. Think of my son !—

VIC. Oh, yet retire, I pray you ;
Scarce does his Reason hold her doubtful seat,
And one rude shock may strike her from 't for ever.

MEND. We will not press upon your sorrows, lady.
My honored lord, I pray you, hence with me ;
The vassals eye us with stern jealous looks,—
There may be danger here.

DE ZEL. (*Fiercely to Manuel.*)—We meet to-
morrow !— [Exeunt.

MAN. What! dost go—go to prepare thy
cause,—

To whisper to the credulous venal judges,
And lie, and bribe, and sooth them to corruption,
As the light fanning of the vampire's wing
Lulls the protracted slumber into death?
And sit I here mid women, and mid weeping?
No, I will rouse me.

I must be prompt and eager with this adversary.
To-night I'll to Cordova—" Ho !—within !—
" Prepare my chariot—arm my vassals—haste !—
" Caparison my fleetest steeds for th' journey !—
" But let their housings all be black—look to 't!
" I will, with such a retinue, come on
" Cordova ; and her guilty towers shall tremble,

“ As if the Moor again were at her gates.
Armies of griefs shall troop on my sad side :
Whole hosts of banded groans, tear-wasted nights,
And pining days, that wake to curse the sun,
Yet have no hope in darkness—come with me !
Why dost thou loiter ?

VIC. Oh, my hapless father,
Brave not the stormy wild, and pitiless hour !
Scarce hath the morning gleam'd.

MAN. Away ! away ! (*Struggles.*
The time is wearing—Forward to Cordova !

(*Servants enter in tumultuous preparation.—He staggers from weakness.*)

VIC. What ! on these tottering limbs ! oh, stay, for mercy !

MAN. Away ! I needed but Alonzo's arm—
Hasten, ye loitering slaves !

[*Going out with feeble step.*

By Heaven I'll smite to the dust the arm that stays
me ! [Exeunt.

SCENE III.

“ *A Cave on the Banks of the Guadalquivir; the River*
“ *seen by a pale Dawn through an Arch in the Back-*
“ *ground; Almorad standing with a Torch at the*
“ *Entrance; a Boat coming down the Stream.*

“ ALM. They come ! I hear the dashing of their oars.
“ It hath that ominous sound the listener's heart
“ Beats heavy time to.

" If there doth live in lifeless things a sense
" Obscure, portentous, such as, without voice,
" Tells, not unheard, its true and terrible tale
" To the soul of man within him—if this be
" Be hush'd, thou fearful spirit of the place,
" To our blind and stifled murmurs—Rocks, reply
" not!

" For it is done, and in your cavern tomb
" The secret sleeps for ever.

" (*The Boat arrives—the Assassins debark.*)

" ALM. Have ye sped?

" 1st. Ass. (*Pointing to the Boat.*) Look there, and
" ask not.

" 2d. Ass. Wouldst thou view it closer?

" ALM. No, not for many worlds.

" Ass. Thy task must now be ended; lead to the
" cave;

" The bark is waiting, and the morning breaks.

" Why move you not?—Here's gold for you.

" (*Gives a purse.*)

" ALM. I know thy power, thou bright and glitter'ing
" devil!

" To plunge in death the soul of him that seeks thee:

" Reverse the spell in which thou'st bound my spirit,

" And I will worship thee.

" He will be ever with me, ever near me,

" In daylight and in darkness.—Thou grim shape,

" Am I for ever thine?

" 1st. Ass. Come, come, no more delay.

" ALM. Shall no blest hour
" Give me to vindicate my soul from guilt,
" And stand my own avenger upon him
" Who led me into crime ?
" 1st. Ass. Come, Almorad.
" (*Almorad shews great reluctance and horror ; at*
length they drag him to the Boat, which he enters
with them, and it rows away.)"

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A splendid Apartment in the house of De Zelos, who is discovered regarding the magnificence around him with delight.

DE ZEL. OH, how prosperity doth gild our merits !
 How virtuous have these few short wondrous hours
 Made the despis'd De Zelos ! Sage, grave men,
 Shame not in flattery's summer-dew to thaw
 The ice in which my poverty had cased them ;
 Yea, such vile comments on their baseness make,
 That strumpet Fortune seems a vestal to them.—
 They knew it would be thus : Heaven would not leave
 Itself unvindicated in my fortunes.
 Beshrew me but the word was on my lip,
 Even to the first that hailed me.—' Grave Justiza,
 Am I the beggar whom your pamper'd train
 Pushed yesterday from their insulted path ?'
 That noble blood, for whose dilated channels
 Their hollow thanks mock heaven, within my veins
 Want might have turned to ice—and they had reck'd
 not !

Those lips, where flattery breathless 'tendence gives,
 Had wanted praise, if they had wanted bread ;

And steps, that to my crowded threshold throng,
Had trod upon my grave, nor paused to read
Want laid its victim there !——Ximena, ha !

Ximena enters in mourning.

Ungracious and perverse ! whence is that garb,
When all around smiles in the light of joy ?
The gifts of noble friends have made our hovel
Shew like a palace ;—even the bending usurers—
Aye, the swart tribe, whom our religion loves not—
Have forc'd within my slowly-op'ning palm,
Which wonder lock'd, ingots of massive gold.
Canst thou view all this splendour's summer glow,
Yet be the passing cloud that dims its light ?

XIM. I am a cloud that soon must glide away :
Chide it not in its passing. Oh, my father,
Even parting travellers to their transient mate
Do say farewell in kindly accent !
My days are number'd—Trust a broken heart—
Lightly I doff the weeds of costly state,
And gauds that women love, so, flung around me,
A virgin's shroud enfold a virgin's breast.
No coronal my weary temples bind,
So o'er my pale parch'd brow there drop in death
That pearl of price, a father's tear !

DE ZEL.

What's this ?

What whining dream of pastoral pageantry ?
I'll have thee live, and love, and be a bride.
Didst thou not mark with what inventive art
Luxurious gallantry hath decked thy bower ?—

The silken awning wrought in looms of Ind'—
The cresset's fretted silver, whose soft light
Fell upon vased flowers—the broider'd footcloth,
On which the flatter'd step 'mid gardens trod—
All this rich magic of a master's touch,—
It was Mendizabel's gift, my child!—Mendizabel's!
The grave Justiza wooes thee for his bride.

XIM. I know a seat where still my soul is
wand'ring—

A rugged seat, formed by an ancient buttress—
The wild rose canopied it, and the woodbine
Upon that old grey stone wrought tracery :—
There have I sat ; it was in blessed hours—
Nor reck'd of silken couch or sculptured lamp—
For *he* was there, and the bright moon above us.

DE ZEL. Who? who was there?

XIM. Alonzo.

DE ZEL. Hear me, girl—(*much agitated.*)
Thou'lt drive thy father mad!—
Art thou a woman, and unmov'd by pomp?
Art thou a woman, and unsooth'd by love?
Art thou a woman, and untouch'd by pride?
I tell thee, and my soul is pledged—my soul—
Thou shalt be great—shalt be Mendizabel's bride,
And through the thronging streets thy gorgeous train
Blaze in all eyes, and blast the proud Victoria's!—

XIM. Oh, strive not with despair!—I know
thou'd'st have me

A gay and courtly dame, in splendour flare—
But I was form'd to be an humble mate
To one whose partner is the worm!—My father,

Spread o'er the castled cliff the dark grey ash ;
On the proud mountain let the strong pine tower ;
But leave the willow near its wedded stream ;—
'Twill wither if you rend it from the bank
On which it loves to weep !—

DE ZEL. I'll have thee smile ; aye, smile upon a
lover—

Come to the trial, where this hoary dotard
Hath summon'd me—Nay, thou must come—I
will it !—

There will thy noble suitor be—Look to it !—
Come to the hall, and come in other garb,
And give him there such gracious entertainment
As gentle dames to high-born wooers give.

ATTENDANT (*entering*). My lord, the Court
awaits you.

DE ZEL. Well, I come—
Go deck thyself, and rave not of that spot
Where thy sick phantasy, like blighted spring,
Sits weaving withered garlands. [*Exit.*]

XIM. There is a spot, a low and lonely one,
Pride will not envy me—'tis dark and cold ;
But there the weary spirit turns in hope—
There the tir'd step of mortal pilgrimage
Reaches and rests—there slumber with Alonzo
The dreams that with his image liv'd and died.

(*Enter Torrismond. He starts.*)

TORRIS. My sister—ha ! each well-known face
upbraids me—

Yea, each familiar voice is agony—
Where is my father?

XIM. He hath parted hence. (*A long pause.*)

TORRIS. What dost thou think?

XIM. Think?

TORRIS. Aye, what dost thou fear?

XIM. I know not ought to fear.

TORRIS. Nor I; and yet,
To my stunned ear, than this accursed charge
The summoning angel's trump less terrible were.

XIM. Oh, it was but the phrensy of his dotage.

TORRIS. (*eagerly repeating her words.*) Aye—it
was but the phrensy of his dotage.

XIM. Had the dim vision of his troubled eye
Glanc'd on you first, you had been first accused.

TORRIS. Me!—accused me!—Oh that he had!—I
feel

Such inward lightness of a perfect heart,
I had forgiven—yea, I had blest—his phrensy.

ATTEND. (*entering.*) Lady, your father wonders
at your stay.

XIM. I come—and wilt not thou, my brother?

TORRIS. I'll wander like a spirit round the walls;
I dare not enter them. [*Exeunt severally.*]

SCENE II.

The magnificent Gothic portico of the Hall of Justice, through an arch in the back ground. The Members of the Council are seen in their robes, passing along, with Attendants.

(Enter De Zelos, Toralva, and Velasco.)

TOR. Nay, be assured, my worthy honor'd lord,
The council will dismiss this cause with scorn.

DE ZEL. (His worthy honor'd lord—the villain !)
(*Aside.*)—Thanks !

VEL. This raving dotard must so fail in proof
Of what the madness of his grief alleges—
What plea—what ground—what solid evidence ?

DE ZEL. (*forgetting himself.*) Shadow of evidence !
Impossible.

(*recovering.*) What, he hath lost his boy—and he must
wait

Like puling lover o'er the shrouded maid.
Doth not Spain boast of many a valiant youth,
Whose arm can strike in battle like Alonzo's ?

TOR. Aye, many such, and, 'mongst the first, your
son.

DE ZEL. A froward boy ! a froward boy !

VEL. How blest

Is sire in such a son, and such a daughter !

TOR. She is a gracious and a lovely lady ;

And her fair hand upon the grave Justiza
Shall meetly be bestow'd.

DE ZEL. (*breaking from them*) Fair Sir, you
flatter me! [*Exeunt Torralva and Velasco.*]
These fools, with their gross flattery, mock my mood,
Till shamed Credulity resigns her charge,
And Vanity lies perish'd—surfeit-slain!—

Enter Mendizabel as Justiza, splendidly habited.

MEND. My noble friend, I grieve to wear these robes
In such a cause as this.—

DE ZEL. Oh, my grave lord,
This is a homage we must sadly pay
To the delirium of unhappy age ;
But here is one shall better thank your courtesy.

Enter Ximena.

Smile on him, or ne'er hope thy father's smile.

“XIM. (*Aside*) Yea, such a smile peace-portioning
“spirits give

“To the wild baffled hopes of restless man.”

DE ZEL. What, do they say the ancient lord in
truth

Hath a sad journey ta'en?

MEND. He's here already :

With speed beyond a youth's he urges on,
And even now his train ascends the hall.

XIM. He hath no train—on his sad daughter's
arm,

His sole support, he rests.

DE ZEL. (very sternly) Hush, hush,
thou trifle!—

[Gives her hand, with a frown, to Mendizabel,
to lead her out,

I will await your honours on the instant—

Forgotten matter presses on my brain.

[*Exeunt all but De Zelos. A long pause,
during which he seems much agitated.*

DE ZEL. Impossible—impossible!
[*Rushes out.*

SCENE III.

The Hall of Justice. Mendizabel, seated under a canopy, at one side—De Zelos on a splendid seat near him—Judges, Attendants. Mendizabel, suddenly recollecting himself, and starting from his seat, draws De Zelos to the front of the stage.

MEND. My noble lord,

A word with you:—A trifle, but a strange one,

Had well nigh made my memory a truant:

A trifle—yet to this day's claim it doth

An indistinct and strange relation bear:—

This morn, a muffled stranger, darkly wrapt,

With marvellous and ceaseless importunity,

O'erbore my train's resistance ere I rose,

And rush'd into my chamber.—

Like some dark phantom by my couch it stood,

And seem'd to wrestle with some horrible image.

I gazed upon him till, with heaving utterance,
As if a giant's hand grappled his throat,
He muttered forth—"De Zelos is a villain!"—

DE ZEL. (*Starting as from a trance*) *You did
not see his face?*

MEND. No, but strange chance
Disclosed he was a Moor; for, as he spoke,
He placed his sable hand on mine.

DE ZEL. *You saw no face?*
(*Recovering himself*)

In sooth my lord, your witless train do merit
Most heavy chidings, near your couch to suffer
A stranger *with his dagger*.

MEND. *I did not say he bore a dagger.*

DE ZEL. Ha!

In truth, I marked you not.—'Tis a strange tale.
A dagger'd ruffian breaking on your rest,
And hollowing forth I was a *murderer*.

MEND. Murderer?—He said a villain—

DE ZEL. True, most true,—
A villain only—'twas *not* murderer;—
I had forgot myself.—Doubtless, my lord,
It was some maniac, on whose racking brain
Some dark and troubled image dimly press'd,
Of loss that held resemblance to Alonzo's—
For madness, in its wayward potency,
Doth oft transform us to the very agents
Of griefs, whose warp'd and blacken'd thread was wove
In the same web with—But, *you saw no dagger!*

MEND. None, my good lord.—Doubtless, it was a maniac.

(Mendizabel returns to his seat, conversing with the Court. De Zelos remains alone, in front of the stage, quite abstracted, and evidently meditating on what he has heard. An Officer approaches him slowly.)

OFF. My lord, the court is full, and waits your leisure.—

DE ZEL. *(starting.)* What say'st thou?—*that the Moor awaits my leisure?*

OFF. No, my good lord, I spoke not of a Moor.

DE ZEL.

Thou didst not!

Then there are other voices in the hall

Than issue from the lips of those I speak with.

(He takes his seat with much stateliness. Manuel enters on the other side, supported by his daughter. No attendants, Both in deep mourning. One of the Officers comes forward to help him to his seat, which is opposite De Zelos. He declines it gently.)

MAN. I thank you, sir—I have a DAUGHTER still.

MEND. Before on this strange cause we enter, lords,
'Tis meet I should, in generous sorrow, mourn
The noblest blood of Spain, which should have flow'd
In fair and peaceful channel, fiercely thus
Disparts, and, breaking into various streams,
Dashes its angry waves against itself.—

Would that we might unite their thwarting currents!
But, since this may not be, tell us, Don Manuel,

What cause of bloody and momentous tittle,
Against your noble kinsman and your heir,
Doth urge this doubtful charge?

TOR.

One

Who, 'mid the wrecks and tempests of the world,
Hath, level still with honour, held his course.

VEL. One whom Cordova, yea, all Spain, rejoices
To see restored to his just dignities,
And hail'd as Manuel's heir.

[All the council bow to De Zelos.]

DE ZEL. Oh! you flatter me, you flatter me—

MAN. What! sit ye here to flatter or to judge?
Oh ye soiled furs! dishonor'd dignities!
Ye robed mockers of the state ye shame!
With glozing proem of well-sorted words
To make mine enemy shew like a god,
And turn his scaffold to his pedestal—
And bid the summoning trump of judgment flourish
His hollow eulogy in venal courts—
Call you this Justice?—To your trusted hands
She gave her scales, and you weigh falsehoods with
them—

She gave her sword, and 'gainst herself you turn it—
Of all her awful ensigns ye retain
Her bandage only: marry, that ye have stolen,
To bind your eyes withal

MEND.

From the wild rage

Of impotent, but venerable grief,
We turn in pitying deafness; while our eyes
Are quick and sensitive to its juster calls,

Be they in temperance uttered—

Vic.

Temperance!

My dearest father, even from these bad men,
Who with corrupted souls in judgment sit,
Take the ill-meaning lesson of their wisdom.

MAN. Then here I charge you, grave and reverend men,

Robed in the sanctity of awful duty—
To whose high trust 'tis given the mortal door
To open or to shut—that ye sit there
As men who for their judgment shall be judged—
That ye entangle not the upright spirit
In your fine subtleties—in a web of words
Catch struggling Truth, and leave her there o'erthrown—
Watch verbal flaws, the lapses of the tongue,
And set them down for crimes—and, when Conviction
With conquering step comes rushing on the soul,
Lift in your 'fence a high-held, hollow shield,
Inscribed with quaint Formality's chill name,
And bid her come no further!—
I call upon the spirit of these walls,
But do disdain their forms—

MEND. Do you instruct us in our duty, lord?

MAN. I do instruct you in *your nature, man*—
That, above all your quaint and letter'd forms,
Petty enactments, and the snares of courts,
There is a prior and unwritten law,
Viewless, but legible to the soul's clear eye,
That man eraseless in his bosom bears,
And judges, if they would, might read.

MEND.

Well, Sir,

What says your sapient and oracular law,
That, like the wanderer from Religion's light,
First mocks at forms, and next defies its Judge?

MAN. It tells me by that whisper of the soul,
Which to no ear but mine is audible—
By dark array of thronging circumstance,
Which to the inmost soul conviction brings,
But falters in its passage to the tongue ;
By that untold and thrilling evidence
That wants the witnessing oath, and, wanting, spurns,
Yet calls the bristling hair and quivering nerve
T' attest its stern instinctive potency—
By these, that, feeling, yet ye will not feel,
It tells me that De Zelos is a murderer!—

MEND. Words, words,—what proof of such a horrible charge?

MAN. What proof?—*he hated him*—can he deny it?

Could any but his murderer hate Alonzo?
Nay, smile not at the old man's helpless ravings ;
He hated him : for that he was mine heir,
Child of mine age—the bar to his bad hopes—
He hated him!—Why didst thou hate him?—tell me—
I know not the foul secret of *his soul*.

The frown that doomed him is upon thy brow—
The lightning of thine eye that struck him, and parted,
Yet sleeps within its cloud—But I can read it.

DE ZEL. If I have hitherto refrained myself—
If, with check'd tongue and bursting heart, I've sat
To hear my stainless and unblenched name,

The sport of maniac rage—I pray you, lords,
Wrong not the grave respect I bear your court,
And to aught else ascribe it. Old man, I tell thee
The sheeted bones of our dead ancestry
Do rattle in their carments at the charge ;
Thy desperate breath sounds through our buried line—
Thy blood is in my veins—thou canst not taint them
But ev'ry drop in thine should tingle too !—
We were two branches of the self-same trunk !
The dew was on thy stem, and the fresh wave
Fed it with many waters ; the green leaf
Was bright upon thy bough ; the trav'ler paused,
And blest it for its beauty. Such wast thou.
I was a blighted branch—the storm was on me ;
And in my rifted core the winds of heaven
Sung wintry welcome, and made stern abode.
The mildew'd moss upon my brown sere bark
Made verdure seem like blasting—such was I.
The sun is on me now—the storm on thee—
Bear it as I have borne it.
Must I be broke and gathered for the burning,
Because the bolt of heaven hath smote thy pride ?

MEND. My lord, you do with waste of costly language

Obscure the cause which simpler speech had cleared.

DE ZEL. Well, then, I will be plain ;
He says, I slew his son : how doth he prove it ?
Lives there another on the earth to beard me
With the bold charge ?—(*looks round in much terror,*
then recovers himself.)

Or, if there were, 'tis false—
What proof? still to the proof I challenge him!
Witness or evidence semblative—there's none.
He says I hated him—plotted his death,
Even from his infancy.

PER. *He said not so.*

DE ZEL. Well, well, 'twas meant: look at his muffled head,
Look at the speechless motion of his hand,
And tell me what that means.

“PER. (*aside to Victoria.*) This is most excellent.”

DE ZEL. Had I meant so, I had not lack'd the means;

I might have to his sleeping cradle crept,
And with these fingers griped his infant throat.

MAN. 'Tis *false!* *I watched his cradle.* Alonzo,
Thou wast my child of age, or to the battle
I would have follow'd thee!

DE ZEL. Away, thou dreamer!
I might have bribed the venal slaves around him
To mingle poison with his infant food.

MAN. False, false!—they loved him, aye, the meanest of them,
As his own soul.

DE ZEL. I might have stolen upon his careless steps,
And led them to the stream that bathes his towers.

MAN. Oh, hear him, hear him! hear the man of blood,
Convicted by himself—Could such thoughts be,

And not their harbour be a murderer's breast?

MEND. Oh shame, thou ancient lord, where is thy wisdom?

With rash and peevish malice dost thou wrest
The generous anguish of an innocent soul
To thine own shame, not his—Be wise!—be wise!

“VIC. First be ye merciful, oh men of subtilty,
“Who know full well how on the jealous ear
“Of fond insanity allusion works—
“The very charge doth cause th' infirmity,
“And makes your hapless victim what you term him.”

MAN. I am not mad. I am but miserable.
Yet hear me, lords; hear proof. I had a dream—
[*Much agitation and debility.*
Ye mock me—Yes, I had a dream in the forest—
The voice—the dagger—Oh, that they were here—
Aye, my old brain is wreck'd—all mist and twilight.

[*Increasing agitation; he springs across the stage,
and seizes on De Zelos.*

I have but one hope left—*Confess, confess!*

[*Shaking him.*

The eye of God is on thee, and the grasp
Death ne'er unlock'd presses thy throat; confess!—

[*De Zelos remains trembling in his grasp. The
Court rises in great agitation, but, not daring
to interfere, Ximena faints.*

Think of the hollow, valueless pelf thou sellest
A deathless soul for!—*Hath it made me blest?—*

Number against thy ducats shrieks of torment—
These must be thine.

[Changes his tone, and falls on his knees.

Confess, and I will bless thee :

Thy victim's father kneeling here will bless thee !

[The Court rises to interpose ; Manuel waves them off.

Hush ! move not, move not ; on your souls I charge
ye !—

[A long pause, Ximena is borne off.

His eye is speaking, though his writhed lip

Struggles for art's damn'd language—look not on him.

[A pause.

If we were in a desert, thou'dst speak true.

[The Court rises in great indignation.

MEND. Officers of the Court, perform your duty—
Release the Lord De Zelos !——See, he trembles
Yet from the maniac's grasp—

TOR.

It is from rage—

(The Attendants separate Manuel and De Zelos: the former falls into the arms of Victoria, still gazing at de Zelos.)

VIC. *(vehemently)* It is from guilt.

DE ZEL. *(recovering himself)* What should it be
but rage ?

MEND. Oh, sir, we have too far yielded to his
phrensy—

And this wild outrage on all legal form——

DE ZEL. Talk not of legal forms,

As he hath trampled on my name—Thou dotard!
If in thy pithless arm remain'd the nerve
To grasp the shield, or poise the couched lance,
Then shouldst thou feel the weapon truth can wield.

VIC. (*supporting her father.*)

Oh that this woman's arm could but obey
My struggling will!—'twould meet and blast thee,
boaster!

MAN. (*raising himself from her arms with difficulty.*)
Villain—I had a son!—I had a son!

DE ZEL.

'Tis meet

I should in this grave council hold debate
With women and with madmen—

MEND. Stay this distemper'd brawling—lords, your
judgment:

I need not ask your suffrage—yet the forms
Of law do bind me to administer
An oath to the accused, whereby he clears
Himself of crime, even in the lawless thought
Of the unadvised summoner.

MAN. (*starting forward, and gazing on De Zelos.*)

Will he swear?

(*A long pause: De Zelos in great agitation.*)

DE ZEL. I swear—

MAN. (*in an agony of rage, tearing his hair, &c.*)
Perjury, perjury, by heaven and earth!—

DE ZEL. To thee I answer not.—My lords, from
you

I claim the combat in my honour's right:

'Gainst Manuel's champion let my champion stand

In mailed proof—and God defend the right !

MAN. I have no champion—on my desolate side
No mailed foot will stand—my shield is fallen ;
But with it fell its country's !—Oh, that this call
Might wake Alonzo to——What sound is that ?

(Music without.)

MEND. Who wakes that blast of martial minstrelsy ?

Enter Perez, who has gone out to inquire.

PER. It is the warlike band that serv'd Alonzo :
In sad and solemn march they onward come :
His broken spear and helm are on a bier ;
Round it Spain's noblest warriors, dark and sad,
With trailing lance and low-hung banner, tread
To the near fane upon whose holiest shrine
They've vow'd to place them.

MAN. Said I, I have no son ?—I have a thousand !
In ev'ry Spanish soul the offspring lives
Of him whose son bled for his country.

" MEND. My noble lord, *(to De Zel.)*

" It were not wise you did intrust your safety

" To the wild soldiery's enchafed mood ;

" Let us retire until this storm be past.

" DE ZEL. I will not move !

" MEND. Oh, yet retire, I pray you !

" MAN. No, let him stay, and look upon his work.

" DE ZEL. *(Struggling with them.)*

" Off, I will stay ! no power shall move me hence !"

MAN. Grave Lords, your leave. Go, bid them
enter here. I was his father !

My blessing never fell upon his corse—

Let it fall on his bier !

[*Manuel starts up.*

(*Enter Soldiers in procession with the bier, &c.—*

Martial Music.)

(*To De Zelos.*)

Thou, who hast sworn—now swear thee by *these*
reliques,

And I will half believe thee—*Swear, I say !*

(*De Zelos in frightful agitation attempts to advance,*
but knows not where to place his hand—Manuel
seizes it, and places it on the bier.)

MAN. Here—here— [*De Zelos almost insensible.*

(*Torrismond rushing in.*)

TORRIS. He shall not swear— [*Hurrying him off.*

[*Exeunt, Torrismond bearing out*
his father insensible.

MAN. Will he not swear ?

Mine be the oath then—Warriors, kneel with me !—

And kneel *thou* too—

[*To his daughter, they all*
kneel round the bier.

Vengeance ! eternal vengeance !

[*The curtain drops.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Enter De Zelos and two Pages.

DE ZEL. (*thoughtful.*) WHO is the marshal
of the lists?

1st PAGE. Toralva.

DE ZEL. Warn him he suffer not the pestilent
rabble

To yell their cursés o'er the barrier's verge.

1st PAGE. My lord, 'twill be impossible to prevent
them,

So much they love Alonzo's memory.

DE ZEL. Curse on thee, slave! thou speak'st some
conned lesson

That Manuel's gold hath taught thee—Hence!

[*Exit Page.*

[*To the other.*] Is my son's armour in his chamber?

Go—

Go thou, and tell him to be ready straight.

[*A strange music within.*

Whence was that touch of wild unearthly strain !

PAGE. My lord, your daughter—

DE ZEL. Daughter ! I want no daughter.
Where is my son?—Upon a father's cause
His daughter's arm can wield no brand.

[*Exit 2d Page.*

Enter Torrismond, unarmed, dejectedly.

What ! still unarmed ?

TOR. (*very slowly, and with deep dejection.*)
Within my chamber piled lie plate and mail—
Corslet of proof, and helm and lance, are there—
But I do lack a mighty weapon yet.

DE ZEL. Say'st thou ?—What weapon ?

TOR. The adamant of an unquestion'd spirit,
That by itself unsmote defies the world.

DE ZEL. (*gasping with fury.*) How !—
List to me, boy !—I would command myself,
Choak in my struggling spirit, which else would burst
In curses on thy foul degenerate head,
But I will master it.—(*with forced irony.*)

Sir, of your fair courtesy,
I pray you, tell me, feels your dainty arm
The sword too heavy in a father's cause ?
Oh, it would string the nerves of pithless age,
Brace palsy's arm, and imp the foot of lameness ;

Yea, arm all Nature for me.—But, my son,
(*A pause—he looks at Torrismond.*)

Wilt thou not answer?

TORRIS. (*After a silent struggle, throws down his sword.*)

Thou art answer'd!—

DE ZEL. Take up thy brand again, and plunge it
here! (furious rage.)

Wretch!—parricide!—Oh, excellently vile!

Fill up thy cup of consummated guilt!

Leave not to Manuel and his furious daughter

This heart to scoop with their infixed fangs;

Pierce it thyself!—Oh, coward!—conscious coward!

I'll peal it in thine ear, like howls o' th' damn'd.

'Tis fear, fear, fear! aye, craven, cowering fear!—

TORRIS. (*starting as from a trance.*)

Coward!—who call'd me coward?

(*Snatches up his sword, and rushes forward—then recognises his father, and falls on his knees.*)

'Tis my father!

Heaven holds my arm.—That name hath set me mad!

My swoln and burning throat can't utter it.

(*With a shout of derision.*)

Oh! I do shake the loathed thought from me.

Were you a thousand fathers—

Oh, place me on the kindling ridge of fight,

Where fear was never nam'd or mercy felt,

And feel this heart-pulse, if its quicker motion

Betrays one added throb.

Against the darts of mixed and madding hosts

Place but one foe, and let that foe be me :
There, if I shrink, the voice that calls me coward
I'll unresenting hear as I do thine.

DE ZEL. Words—words !—the coin boasters pay
trusting fools with.

TORRIS. (*kneeling.*) By Heav'n, I am no boaster !
[*Rises eagerly.*

(*Bursts into tears—De Zel. looks at him with scorn.*)

Oh, these hot drops of agonizing shame
Are not the dews of fear; a father's voice
Alone had wrung them; let a father's hand
Dry them, and bless me. [Kneeling to De Zelos.

(*De Zelos looks on him for some time, and then says
sternly,*)

DE ZEL. Thou weep'st, but 'tis thy father bleeds.
[*Going.*

TORRIS. (*Starting up*) Where goest thou?

DE ZEL. Where?—to the field !—the field my
son doth fly from.

Give me thy sword— [Furiously.

TORRIS. My father !—but a word—

[Struggling.

DE ZEL. Thy sword !—thy sword !—thou hast no
need for it.

TORRIS. (*With the most eager expression of hope
and joy.*)

What ! wilt thou?—canst thou !—darest thou?—
Can it be?

[With increasing conviction of his father's innocence, from his undertaking the combat himself.]

Thou wouldst not risk the end of mortal guilt !
 Thou wouldst not risk a deathless soul's perdition !
 Innocent ! innocent ! By Heav'n, he's innocent !—
 Oh, my abused father !—curse me now,
 To ease my penitent agony.

[Kneels, kissing his hands.]

DE ZEL. (*Coldly.*) I needed not this proof.

TORRIS. I did—Oh, pardon me !—
 I'm sheathed in iron now—my sandal'd foot
 Could trample hosts—my arm could strive with giants !
 Truth holds her bright shield o'er the breast of Tor-
 rismond ;

Nor does he ask for other panoply—
 (*Starting*) My father !—thou lookst ghastly !—

DE ZEL. (*Gazing towards the door*) No marvel,
 I've looked on ghastly sights !—(*recovering*) I'm not
 well.

This struggle hath o'ercome me, and—'tis o'er.

TORRIS. Oh ! pardon me—the doubt was damnable !
 It was a crime unfilial and unnatural !—

DE ZEL. Hush !—torture me no more !—Mark
 me, my son !—

If in the lists thou seest my eye—my lip—
 Give speechless sign of inward agony—
 (Tho' the vile crowd their vilest comment make)
 What wilt *thou* deem it ?—

TORRIS. What should your son deem it?
Perchance a fear (full needless) for his safety—
What other fear could blanch my father's cheek?

DE ZEL. (*Starting, and turning from him.*)
Was that a viewless clarion, dull and deep?

TORRIS. No! 'twas the wind pealing thro' yon low
arch!

'Tis a dreary day!—

DE ZEL. (*Looking up*)—A drearier night will
follow—

The troubled clouds are in dark volumes sweeping,
As the rent banners of Alonzo's battle
Were hovering o'er us still—'twill be a storm.

(*in great terror.*)

Hast thou not heard, how, mid a combat, Heaven
Hath sent its champion in the lightning's flash,
To strike *upon the right*, and blast the murderer?—
If thou shouldst see my stiff and blacken'd corse
Give dark reflection to the withering bolt,
Outstretch'd in horrid death—

TORRIS. By the hot ashes
I'd kneel, and swear i' th' face of wrathful Heaven
That thou wert innocent—for—*art thou not?*

DE ZEL. (*Embracing him eagerly; then rushing
out.*)

That's my brave son—*Oh! what a heart have I!*

[*Exit De Zelos.*

(*Torrismond follows him with his eye, then stands fixed
in meditation, not seeing Victoria till she is kneeling
to him.*)

TORRIS. (*rushing out, sees her*) Victoria!

VIC. Yes, Victoria!

Thus pale, and prostrate at *his* feet, who once
Thought the hour lost that was not spent at hers.
'Tis Manuel's daughter trembles in the dust.

TORRIS. Oh! rise, and mock me not to utter madness ;

Scarce hath my heart regain'd its trembling seat,
And thou art come to shake it in its hold,
And bid resolved duty blench like guilt.

VIC. Oh! raise me not, for suppliants should be humble.

I was the daughter of a lordly line,
Lov'd by a noble youth—What am I now?
The shunned offspring of a blighted stem,
Who, in the filial agony of soul,
Kneels at the feet of him who said he lov'd her—
Kneels for a father's life—

TORRIS. A father's life!

I go to meet his champion, not thy father!

VIC. He *hath no champion*—they have left him none.

Mad with his wrongs and woes, the ancient man
Comes tottering to the lists—chases away
The weeping few, who still his steps do watch—
Calls *for his son* to brace his shield—then poises
With giddy grasp his lance, and wounds the air!—
Couldst thou see him,
Thou wouldst in tears steep thy averted brand,
Yea, in thy bosom plunge its trenchant point,
Sooner than strike at his.—It is a shrine

The god has left, but his departed presence
Sheds a sad honor o'er the sunken fane,
Made holier by desertion!—*Spare the ruin!*—

TORRIS. *Spare it!*—I'll kneel and worship it—

Take this; (*the sword*)

And, when I raise it 'gainst that hallowed breast,
May its point turn, and pierce through mine!

(*Kneeling, and presenting the sword to her with enthusiasm. Trumpets sound within.*)

TORRIS.

Hark! hark!

Have I not sworn?—Have I no father too? (rushing forward, and falling on his knees.)

Thou who hast called me to this horrible conflict,
Let not my breaking heart forbid thy purpose.

(*Rising wildly, and seizing Victoria's hand.*)

I know not how, or right or wrong, but this—

Thy tears, for which my heart sheds drop for drop
(And soon may weep in blood) against a father's,
Wrung from the agony of his pallid brow,
Are weighed in the soul's balance, and found wanting.

VIC. Go, then; but know what enemy awaits thee:
The shield of Manuel is his daughter's breast;
Her streaming hair his banner; and his pledge
The hand her agony raised to thee in vain.
Bear on thy shield emblazed a virgin's heart
Broken for thee. Away! the trumpet summons.

(*Trumpet sounds.—He rushes to throw the sword at her feet; she spurns him. Trumpet sounds again; he catches it up, and rushes out. Exeunt.*)

SCENE II.

The Lists : Marshals, Heralds, &c.—Flourish.
Enter De Zelos, Mendizabel, Torralva, and Attendants.

MEND. Nay, 'twas a master-touch of curious art
To send th' inflam'd, romantic soldiery,
On the wild summons of a doubtful foe.
Oh, many dangers might have follow'd else,
For they so love Alonzo's memory.—

DE ZEL. Mark me, my worthy lord, this ancient
railer,
Not to your courts confines his clamorous outrage ;
In your wide streets it bruits, raves thro' your walls,
Teaching the credulous change-loving multitude,
The wealth-sworn burgher, and swart artizan,
Within your crowded, but hushed streets, to throng—
To nod with hollow look—gripe with stern clutch—
Dart dangerous meanings from the speaking eye,
Then part like men whose parting seems to say—
“We'll meet anon to purpose.”—Look to this—
Your streets are full of it.

MEND. 'Twere fit that we devise how we may meet
The evil Manuel's restless passion threatens.
What !—Shall we suffer a fond frantic man
To wander up and down the troubled ways,
Madding the citizens with giddy tales
Of crimes, that credulous Wonder thirsts to swallow,
When they are most incredible ?

DE ZEL. *(with eager vehemence)*—Banish him !
banish him !

**Let me not hear his helpless cries for justice !
By Heaven, I almost pity him myself !**

TOR. But how may this be done?

MEND. When the combat
(His madness dreams of hopeless champion in)
Hath summon'd, and th' expected lists are empty,
I will pronounce his exile from Cordova ;
Amerce him of his vassals, lands, and towers ;
Yea, make him thank us dearly for the mercy
That spares his life, who doth the combat bide,
And whom its issue fails.—

DE ZEL. My noble Lord,
The city well may thank your prudent care.
Yet, let me pray you that your noble pity
Will spare mine ancient kinsman's hapless state.
On Almontcar's shore he hath a castle,
Whose turrets o'er the moon-light surges cast
The shade that Sorrow loves. There let him wander,
And o'er the moaning waters pour the plaint
Their chiding gives best answer to.

MEND. 'Tis excellent.
Your native policy, my Lord, puts to the blush
Our law-taught Wisdom.

DE ZEL. Oh! 'tis I should blush.
No more—no more, I pray.—Accomplish this,
And my Ximena's hand is thine. [Trumpet.
Hark! hark!
You're summon'd to the lists.

*Toralva seats himself as Judge of the Field. Marshals,
Heralds, &c.*

Perez and Moncalde.

MON. He comes, indeed ; but in such mournful
guise,
'Twould move an enemy to remorseful pity,
Were not that enemy De Zelos.

PER. They say his reason's clouded—I did fear it.

MON. Clouded indeed ! but through the troubled
shade

*Breaks fitfully at times a struggling gleam,
Feebler than light, and sadder than the darkness.*

PER. Tends his sad daughter on him still ?

MON. She does.

*[Manuel enters, supported by Victoria, gazing
round him unconsciously. Perez and Moncalde
seem to be conversing with her on her father's
state. Victoria shakes her head mournfully.]*

MAN. Why, this is meet ;—I love this pageantry.
You're welcome, gentles ! lovely ladies, welcome ;
I've seen the day I could have hailed your beauties
With gayer greeting, and around the lists
Pranced my proud barb careering.

[Takes Mon. aside.]

Why is this ?

What are they met for, all these gorgeous gallants ?
To break a lance, I trow, for some gay dame,
Who is not worth a splinter of a lance.

Why do they gaze on me ? I'm old, but still
They should not make a mockery of my weakness.

MON. Oh ! my fallen master ! [*Turning aside.*

VIC. Oh ! my hapless father,
Retire with me ; nay, let me guide you hence !

MAN. Guide me !—I thank you—ha ! ha ! ha !
Look I like one who needs a guide ?—

I thank you for your courtesy, fair dame ;
But I would rather have my daughter's care ;
She will be here anon.

[*They get about him, and try to lead him away ;
he breaks furiously from them.*

MAN. I will not stir ;—rend from its base yon arch,
And then despair to move me—Off, off, off !
I do not know the cause that brought me here ;
But there is something *here* that bids me stay ;
I'll tell't anon—treat not an old man roughly.
Thou seemest a gentle dame—have patience with me ;
Leave me with her—I'll whisper it in her ear.

(*Whispers Victoria.*)

I came to seek my son ; dost know of him ?
(*Victoria in an agony of tears throws herself on him.*)

VIC. Oh God !—Oh God !—

MAN. Weep, for those tones resemble
A voice I lov'd, and lov'd it best in grief—
(*Recovering recollection, and raising her hair from
her forehead to recognise her.*)

I know thee now—Oh God ! my son ! my son !
(*Falls back in their arms.*)

TOR. The day doth wear apace. [*Trumpets sound.*

Torrismond enters armed.

TOR. Herald! demand of yonder knight—

HER. Why comest thou
An armed knight into the mortal lists?

TORRIS. De Zelos' son, heir of a noble line,
Doth claim the combat on his father's right!
My cause is known to all these warlike Judges;
My soul be on the issue.

HER. Valiant knight,
Receive thy brand, and heav'n defend the right.
(*De Zelos rises from his seat, comes to his son, and
throws a chaplet round his neck.*)

DE ZEL. My son, around thy warded bosom bear
This brede of many dyes—'tis twined with spells.

TOR. (*flinging it off, and striking his heart*)
Away with it—my talisman is here!

HER. Sound trumpets for th' appellant.

Torrismond's Trumpet blown thrice.—No Answer.

HER. No trumpet answers upon Manuel's side.

MAN. (*repeating the words in feeble despair.*)
No trumpet answers upon Manuel's side!

Give me a sword—a sword! [*rushing forward.*

VICT. (*With a shriek.*) Hark!—'twas a
trumpet. (*A long pause.*)

A Trumpet heard, faint and distant, repeated thrice.

A Knight appears in the lists.

HER. Declare thy name and cause!

STRAN. A stranger-knight—
To all but one within these lists unknown—

I claim the combat in Don Manuel's cause,
And feel his cause is just.

MAN. (*tottering towards him.*) God bless thee,
stranger!

STRAN. Away!—Thy touch is as a scorpion's to me.
One boon, ye Judges! I demand to go,
Triumphant or defeated, from your lists,
Unclosed my vizer, and my name unknown.

TOR. Sir Knight, your boon is 'gainst all laws of
combat.

DE ZEL. (*vehemently.*) Be it so—be it so—my lords
I pray you.

TOR. Then be it so.—Sound for the combat
there. (*Charge.*)

(*Fight—the Stranger is defeated.*)

MAN. Treachery! treachery! it was some slave
Whose arm was hir'd to strike the air.

[*The Stranger beckons to De Zelos, who advances reluctantly—the Stranger lifts his vizer slowly to him, and instantly closes it again,—his face is black—De Zelos, staggering with horror, falls into the arms of Torrismond, who supports him.—The Stranger is borne off.*]

TOR. I now pronounce the sentence of the field—
De Zelos is acquitted!

MAN. (*deliriously*)——False! false! false!

TOR. Hence, maniac! thank our mercy for thy life!

[*Manuel bursts into all the rage of madness.*]

The curtain drops.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

An ancient Gothic Apartment in the Castle.

(Victoria enters, followed by Perez and Moncalde bearing lights—she gazes round at the desolate appearance of the chamber, and speaks to Perez.)

VIC. SET down thy light, and hasten to my father.

(Perez sets down the light on a table—Victoria sits down exhausted.)

MON. How fares the ancient lord?—How fares his mind?

VIC. I tended him unknown on his sad journey,
He knew me not, Moncalde!—*(in tears)*
But, when we reach'd these walls, he turn'd on me
Such piercing looks of piteous recognition,
I could not bear the sight, and hasten'd on.
Had it pleased Heav'n to try us with all maladies
That shake the frame, and rack the quiv'ring nerve,
Me his sole watcher, by his straw-wove pallet
I would have borne and bless'd it.

" But oh, his mind, Moncalde !—it doth stab me
" To use the language of usurp'd authority,
" Unfilial and irreverent, from these lips,
" Needful to parley with his wayward moods—

" MON. It is a trial sharp and terrible,
" Yet sink not thou beneath it, but have hope.

" VIC. (*Gazing gloomily around the apartment*).
" Is this th' abode to which they have banish'd him ?
" Is this then doom'd my father's last retreat ?
" The gloomy grandeur of its ruined pride
" Might check the pulse of youth, and chill its blood ;
" Yea, unto Fancy lend such wizard potency,
" Unblenched Reason holds weak mastery o'er.
" How will it work on his—(*increasing terror*)
" Dark walls our prison, and perhaps our tomb ?
" The voice of by-gone time, that sweeps your confines,
" Murmurs of deeds long buried in its lapse ;
" Each step I print upon your marble floor
" Seems as it trod the unexplored dwelling
" Of some unearthly tenant, whose roused voice
" Peals on the thunder of the answering echoes,
" To bid me pause—(*gazing round*.)

" MON. Oh, lady ! is it thus
" Thou wouldst uphold thy father's failing steps ?
" Wake from thy fearful vision, for he comes !—

" *Manuel enters feebly, supported by Perez ; they place
" him in a chair ; he looks round him vacantly.*

" VIC. How fares it with my father ?

" MAN. Very well !

" VIC. Oh! answer not thus calmly.

" PER. Do you note him?

" He is much chang'd.

" VIC. Oh!—I do dread such change:

" Far more I fear this sullen hopeless melancholy

" Than insane impotence of wildest passion.

" *As she continues to speak, Manuel observes her*

" *attentively, and his countenance becomes gra-*

" *dually illuminated with reason. He turns to her.*

" MAN. You weep; nay, then, your heart's wound

" is not mortal:

" Why do I strike, in vain, this rock for water?

" *(Striking his heart.)*

" Back, back! ye press too much upon my brain.

" PEREZ. This murky chamber's airless gloom

" o'er-powers him.

" VIC. Wilt thou walk forth upon the terraced

" rampart?

" It still is light abroad, though here is night.

" See! the rich beauty of the ev'ning wooes thee!

" Even the full glory of the twilight Heaven,

" Most beautiful when faint!—Come, ere it fade.

" MAN. He loved to gaze upon the twilight Hea-

" ven!

" Beautiful in its faintness. Then I lov'd it!—

" VIC. Oh, come with me, my father, forth in

" light,

" And the pure breeze shall whisper healthful thought,

" Cool thy parch'd lip, and fan thy fev'rous breast.—

“ MAN. I’ve seen the pure breeze lift his raven locks,
“ As fairy fingers with their ringlets play’d,
“ Enamour’d.—I’ve by twilight gaz’d on him—
“ His eyes’ dark glories wild, his godlike form—
“ Till love resembled grief, and spoke in tears!
“ That dark eye had misfortune’s doubtful presage;
“ It had that troubled melancholy loveliness;
“ ’Twas like the fabled flow’r of woe, that lines
“ Of sorrow in its cup of beauty bears.
“ Great God!—What man could lift his hand against
“ him?

“ VIC. Nay, list to me!
“ We’ll wander forth with light step and free heart,
“ Tun’d to impulsive and spontaneous joy;
“ Sweetest when most unlooked for.

“ MAN. (*Sternly.*) Why should I go?
“ I shall meet a father!—he’ll cross my path,
“ Blessing his age’s hope, and leaning on him:
“ That blessing will be as a curse to me—
“ And, when my lips in agony shape the sound
“ That habit still makes sweet—starting, I’ll feel
“ I have no son to bless!

“ VIC. (*Falling at his feet.*) Thou hast a daughter!
“ ter!—

“ MAN. Where is she?—Yes—but she is not
“ Alonzo!

“ VIC. Then kneeling hear me—At the solemn rite,
“ That peals its requiem o’er the parted dead,
“ Be not thou present.

“ MAN. Ask Perez if I hold not constant speech:
“ Nay, I will be as docile as school’d infancy.

" PER. Yield to him, lady.

" VIC. (*weeping.*) Oh! my father!—speak not
 " With such unnatural humility,
 " Torturing your daughter's heart, and she will yield
 " To aught you will.—

" MAN. (*on seeing her tears.*) I fear I have of-
 " fended!

" I feel I have—I pray you, pardon me!—
 " I know I should not kneel, but you will pardon
 " me.—

" VIC. Oh! hold!—nor drive me mad—

" MAN. I did not think of thee—
 " In my soul's agony forgot thy pangs;
 " I saw thy dimmed eye, nor thought thy tears
 " Could flow for aught but for Alonzo's loss.
 " Torrismond!—aye—he was a gentle youth—
 " But was his harvest like Alonzo's gleanings?

" VIC. (*In a sudden agony of tears*)
 " I think not of him!—

" MAN. (*Viewing her with doubt and grief*)
 " Ah!—thou think'st not thus.

" (*approaching her with melancholy tenderness*)
 " Wed him when I am dead!—

" VIC. Rend not my heart in twain—nay, doubt
 " me not—

" MAN. There is a voice, the only one I hear;
 It calls me to his tomb " (*Is rushing out, and feels*
 " *his weakness.*)

" But I must lean on thee!

" [*Exeunt.*"]

SCENE II.

Gothic Ruins.

*In the back ground the Chapel of the Castle,
the window illuminated; a low door beneath.*

Ximena enters, conducted by a Guide.

GUIDE. Sad lady, wander not on these wild shores,
The sun is sunk—

XIM. Its last and sinking ray
Seem'd pointing to some beautiful world of rest,
Whither its bright steps pass'd.

GUIDE. Thy frame is worn with weariness, and
thy strength
Ill seconds the strong purpose of thy will.

XIM. (*advancing feebly*) Kind guide, thy faith-
fulness and gentle 'tendance
Deserve the meed of my sad confidence—
I am the daughter of a noble house,
By cruel causes urg'd to fly its roof,
Shrouding my sad steps in obscurity.
Perchance thou know'st of consecrated walls
That would receive a wanderer—wipe her tears
In holy charity—and o'er her grave
Bid vestal murmurs breathe chaste melody
For a true maiden's soul!—

Chant of Solemn Music distantly.

Peace to the warrior's soul

In holy slumber laid,

Lull'd by the bells that toll

A requiem to his shade!

GUIDE. Near to us stands the holy fane thou seek'st,
And to its walls a sad and sacred band
Have in dark pilgrimage come wending on,
To chant a requiem for a warrior's soul.

XIM. A warrior's soul! perchance some hapless
chief,
Who perish'd fighting by Alonzo's side!—

GUIDE. 'Tis for Alonzo's self, old Manuel's
son!

There stands the castle of his ancestry.

XIM. Are those the towers of Almunecar? those
The ancient seat of Manuel?—

GUIDE. Lady, those—
And deep beneath the rocks that rampart it
Slumber the parted glories of his line.
Sad greeting will the ancient lord receive;
The funeral bell will roll his heavy welcome,
And his first step o'er his son's bier shall totter.

XIM. (*Aside.*) First may it tread on mine!

GUIDE. Whilst thou didst pause
O'er the still beauty of the twilight ocean,
I heard the portal bell give dismal note
That its sad lord approach'd.—

XIM. Hold!—said'st thou not
The funeral dirge shall on this eve be chanted?
Take this—and this—so it may buy my entrance
To the dark spot where rests that empty bier.
A Spanish maid
Would to her country's hero pay a tribute
Richer than all that yet has deck'd his grave.

(*The Guide points out to her the door beneath the illuminated window. She enters it. Vittoria, Perez, and Manuel, senseless.*)

MAN. (*Revives, and breaks from them madly.*)

Back—I say!—the voice!—the summoning voice!
The night-raven cheeks his scream, and the scared owl
Breaks off his startled vesper—Hark!—it calls!
My soul is with ye—tenants of the darkness
Would that ye were with me!

Oh! that some sound unnatural, life bears not,
Some sound that maddens, and that madd'ning kills,
Were hollowed thro' my brain, and pierced and
stunndit.

Oh that I were with those that I have seen,
And answered with the voice that talk'd with me!—

VIC. What voice?—Gentle, my father, come with
me;

List to no voice but mine—'tis mine speaks with thee.

MAN. Away! the council sends me on a journey,
And we must go.

(*Apparently giving orders to his domestics, and busy giving orders for a journey.*)

Look to your gear—we travel—

The way is wondrous dark, the night is foul.
Who is that horseman, with such fearful form,
That rideth headmost of our company?

How fast we skirr along!—I like not this—

Turn back—turn back!—we're on a precipice—

Oh! we are lost,—the dark guide wafts us on—

Oh! they have ta'en the deep and awful leap,

And I must follow them.—Victoria, hold me!—
Art thou there in truth?—

I am not not mad—not mad—I swear to thee
I heard a voice—nay, do not look on me
With that incredulous sadness—send *them* hence,
And I will tell thee, if my breath can utter it.

VIC. I pray you, speak to me— [To Manuel.

MAN. Yes! I will speak to thee—and list thou to
me:

They would but mock at me—and I do feel
They have some cause—even in the next sad mo-
ment

I may strange converse with those phantoms hold
That cleave the twilight clouds—List to me *now*—
I heard it—in faint dolorous sobs it broke
Beneath his bier—The voice, th' unearthly voice,
Murmured Alonzo's name—*Thou lookest on me.*

VIC. Nay, nay, I look'd not so and yet—per-
chance—

What if it were the vision of thy fancy?

[*Very timidly and cautiously.*

MAN. Ask thou Moncalde that—Moncalde heard
it—

With beckoning hand I called him—bid him listen.
What!—dost thou doubt Moncalde?—Must all ears
That hear the sounds *I* hear be phrensy-struck?
Was he Alonzo's father too?

VIC. (*Struck and overcome*)—Oh pardon me!
Ill stay and watch with thee—I too must hear it.
Should that strange summons come—

Thou saidst Moncalde on the bell would smite,
Should he that wild voice hear.

MAN. Hush! hush! and listen!

[He grasps her hand; they remain watching.]

MAN. What if his murderer were lurking there?

VIC. Oh! turn your thoughts from such fond
hopeless fancies.

MAN. *(With sudden energetic hope)*

What if he were alive!

VIC. *(In deep anguish)*—Oh! my poor father!
[The bell tolls.]

MAN. Hark! 'tis the summons—Off!—withhold
me not!

Moncalde is not mad—come not thou with me!

Away! away!—

*He throws her off, and rushes thro' the door beneath
the window—Victoria goes out, calling for assist-
ance.*

VIC. Help! help!—Oh! Perez, hear me!

[Exit.]

SCENE II.

*The Vault, with the Monuments of Manuel's family,
—Inscriptions and Banners.—Ximena lying ex-
tended on Alonzo's Cenotaph.—Manuel enters.—
Lamp suspended from the roof of the vault.*

MAN. Aye! this is at should be—I am now
In the very central seat and house of horror;

Bones rattle beneath my steps, and o'er my head
The riven and mouldering banners, wind-shaken,
Flap heavily.—What art thou?—

Awake! awake! the living sleep not here—

What art thou, that with fiend-like mockery scoffest
O'er relics Murder's ruthless hand did spare?—

XIM. Thou knew'st me once—If on thy troubled
vision

Trace of these withering features wanders still—

MAN. (*recognising her, and instantly conceiving
a purpose of revenge*)

Know thee!—ha! ha!—by my soul's griefs I know
thee—

His daughter!—his!—a daughter for a son!

And on his tomb!—Heaven whets the dagger *there*!

(*A burst of wild laughter—he seizes her.*)

'Twere more than man not to be demon here—

As he hath left me hopeless, so shall he

Be hopeless amongst fathers—As his blow,

Struck thro' Alonzo's heart, hath broken mine

Driving me forth a maniac and an outcast

So shall he, in his agony of soul,

Call on his daughter lost, and Echo mock him!—

What hand of death hath led thee here?—Thou worm!

Call on thy saints, and die.

XIM. Strike it home!

Its blow shall not efface Alonzo's image!

(*Kneeling, and presenting her bosom.*)

MAN. What!—didst thou love Alonzo? truly love him?

Come to my heart, my daughter!—

(*He flings away his dagger, and opens his arms—she rushes into them. A long pause.*)

Aye! he loved thee!

I do remember now—How float the dreams
Of many joys round his recalled image!—

(*Softening—then stamps with sudden recollection.*)

Oh! thy accursed father!—how his hand
Hath broke the ties that bound so many souls!—

XIM. (*Bursting out with wild energy.*)

False! false!—unjust and false!—high Heaven, whose
hand

Hath led the sufferer to this wond'rous hour,

Let not her failing strength desert her now—

Oh yet for breath, to speak *my father innocent!*

MAN. Ha! ha! ha!—

XIM. *Alonzo's murderer is within this vault!*

MAN. The murderer! *whose?*—within this vault?

What vault?

XIM. Upon the rocky floor, a darkling form,
Bleeding in mortal pangs, *extended lies—*

And here in agony unutterable

He did declare himself Alonzo's murderer!

MAN. Where is he now?

XIM. Seest thou yon arched vault?

MAN. I can see nothing—mists of eddying fire—
Lead me there, thou—Oh!—that he yet may live!—
Ne'er for Alonzo's safety pray'd my soul

More fervently—Oh!—that he may be living,
And his last groan make music to mine ear!

[*Exit Manuel.*]

Enter Terrismond.

TORRIS. Here doth she bide! Ximena! Sister!
hear me!

XIM. Is it my brother?

TORRIS. It is thy brother.
And have I sought, and do I find thee thus,
My own Ximena?

XIM. Nor thine, nor mortal's, now!
Thou must not strive with death. Oh! Terrismond!
The tale that trembles on my dying lips
Waited thy truth to witness it.

TORRIS. What tale?
Rest on my bosom, and be calm!

XIM. I will;
But I must speak, and thou must hearken too—
My message speaks from—Alonzo's sepulchre,
There past my awful night—my last—and there
I met a dying wretch, whose felon-hand
Alonzo's enemy had brib'd to stab him!—

TORRIS. Alonzo's enemy!

XIM. Aye! that unknown
Mysterious being, whom no search hath traced.
Mad with despair, in terrible expiation,
He sought the arm'd lists to perish there.
Overthrown by thee, he dragged his wounded limbs
To this dread vault.

TORRIS. Give me the villain's name
Who urged him to the deed—Oh, my wrong'd father!

XIM. An oath had seal'd his lips—he dar'd not speak it,
But to my hands he gave the very dagger
The villain, in unguarded haste, had giv'n him
To do the deed of blood—*His name is on it !*

TORRIS. Quick !—give it me—

(Snatches, and attempts to draw it.)

XIM. *(Struggling in death.)* Hold !—On thy soul,
I charge thee !

On its dread hilt he swore me ne'er to draw it
But in the presence of th' assembled Judges,
Dreading Concealment's partial hand.—Swear thou !
Vex not my parting soul.

TORRIS. I solemnly swear—

My sister, ha !—those fixed eyes—

These dews of death—Is there no human help ?

XIM. There is no *human* help—My father's
innocent.

TORRIS. If ye are men, assist me—bear her hence !
(They bear her out.)

SCENE THE LAST.

The Great Hall of the Castle, hung round with Banners and Trophies. A Door leading to Manuel's Apartments in the back Scene. Victoria enters, followed by Perez.

VIC. 'Tis horrible to hear !—I cannot bear it.
And yet that Moorish corse, yet bleeding fresh,
Doth such strange suffrage to his ravings lend,
That reason wanders in credulity,

And doubt is racked to madness.— [Horn' sounds.
Whence that summons?

Enter Moncalde hastily.

MONC. Where is my Lord?

VIC. What message claims such haste?

MONC. De Zelos!—

VIC. Ha! De Zelos!

MONC. With a train
Of armed Knights and reverend Counsellors,
Is at the castle-gates, and calls for Manuel.

VIC. Go, Perez, you, and watch my father
closely;

Let not the echo of De Zelos' footstep
Approach his chamber.— [Exit Perez.

MONC. Wilt thou not retire?—

VIC. No: the last daughter of high Valdi's line
Shall meet the enemy of her fallen house
Even on the ruined threshold of its pride.

Enter De Zelos, Mendizabel, Attendants, &c.

MEND. Unbend your brow, fair dame, nor frown at
us,
Who on the duty of our office come.

DE ZEL. My lord, our part no soothing prologue
needs

To please a lady's ear—a father's duty
Hath brought me here; nor will I quit these walls
Till their foul prison give me back my daughter,
By force or fraud within their darkness held.

VIC. His daughter! what new scheme of guilt is
this?

Or hath the madness of his victim smote him?

DE ZEL. Aye! my lost daughter!—Lady, her I seek—

*Here from Cordova's towers her flight was traced ;
And there is one who to the vaulted passage
Beneath your walls, betray'd her steps last night.*

VIC. Mysterious Heav'n! my father's ravings true.

DE ZEL. Well-painted wonder—Lords, we waste
our time

In fruitless parley here—I'll lead your search
From battlement to moat, nor leave unsounded
One nook that Fancy dreads, or Murder loves.

[He is rushing to the door, Victoria holds him.]

VIC. Hold! hold! for mercy, hold!

DE ZEL. What mystery's here?

Who darkly tenants this forbidden chamber?

VIC. Canst thou not guess? Breaks on thy soul no
warning

To tell who dwells here?—*A wretch—a maniac—
Go meet him, if thou darest.*

*[Releasing his arm, and pointing to the door,
De Zelos pauses; Manuel rushes out,
gazing on them.]*

DE ZEL. *(Turning away, and addressing Mendizabel.)*

Speak thou to him—I cannot bear his look.

MEN. Ancient and reverend lord, forgive our duty
If its stern forms a shew of roughness bear
Our hearts disclaim—The Lord de Zelos' daughter—

MAN. *(abruptly.)* She's here! I told you so.

DE ZEL. Do you mark that?
Pursue your search, nor waste another moment.

MAN. Search, search; I'll pass my life in searching with you:

It is my sole employment.

I've dug through earth's dark cavern—smote the void air—

Call'd on the stars—but no where can I find him!

DE ZEL. Hence! will ye wait to hear a madman rave?

MAN. Who made me mad? Go on your hopeless quest—

Pace these dismantled towers, and desolate halls
Thy hand hath made a desert—I will lead ye
Even to the vault—if thou dare follow there—

[*De Zelos shrinks back—Torrismond rushes in.*]

TORRIS. Forbear! forbear!

(*with extravagant delight.*)

My father! my Victoria!—hear me!—hear—
Hear, Heaven and Earth—Alonzo's murderer's found!
My father's innocent!

MAN. (*with delirious joy*)

Alonzo's murderer's found!—His father's innocent!

(*Staggers towards De Zelos, who repels him with horror, and fixes a terrible look on Torrismond.*)

DE ZEL. What brought thee here?—

TORRIS. My father! Oh my father!

My wrong'd, my innocent, vindicated father,
Rend not thy hand from me, for it shall bless me—

DE ZEL. Bless thee? (*in horror.*)

TORRIS. List, noble judges, to my tale!

Even thou, sad Manuel, list! and let thy grief
For once be just :—the wretch who stabb'd Alonzo,
Who in the darkling forest watch'd and smote him,
Bore a commission'd dagger from the villain
Who bribed him to the deed!—that villain's name
Is on the blade inwrought!—that blade I bear,
Sworn on th' impartial hand of power to place it
Unseen, undrawn, unread!—Mendizabel, take it.

(Kneels and solemnly gives it to Mendizabel.)

Smile, my lov'd father, smile!—

DE ZEL. *(With convulsive emotion.)* Do I not
smile?

*[Manuel deliriously attempts to snatch
the dagger, but is repelled by Men-
dizabel, who gives it back to Torrismond.]*

MEND. Draw it thyself,—and clear thy noble
father!

TORRIS. I hold th' inanimate, incorruptible witness,
Within my grasp! I draw it from the sheath—

I read the name— *[Drops it in despair.]*

VIC. *(Shrieking)* De Zelos!—

MAN. *(Triumphantly)* De Zelos! De Zelos!

*[De Zelos, after an unavailing struggle,
falls into the arms of the attendants.]*

MAN. Ha! ha! ha! ha!—

[Laughing madly, and pointing to him.]

TORRIS. *(Catching up the dagger.)*

Thou art a murderer then!—but what am I?—

I am a parricide—let this atone!

De Zelos, starting from his stupor, prevents him, and stabs himself.

MEN. Bear hence that wretched man!—if yet he lives—

MAN. Lives!—he must live—shall live for thousand deaths!—

Bring racks and fire!—give me your brands, ye slaves!
The Attendants lift up De Zelos, who struggles to hide his face from them, and dies.

MAN. False!—false!—ye cursed judges—do ye hide him?

I'll grasp the thunderbolt—rain storms of fire—

There—there—I strike!—the whizzing bolt hath struck him!—

He shrieks!—his heart's blood hisses in the flame!

Fiends rend him!—lightnings sear him!—Hell gapes for him!

Oh, I am sick with death! (*staggering among the bodies.*)

Alonzo!—Victoria!—I call, and none answer me.

I stagger up and down—an old man—and none to guide me—not one—(*takes Victoria's hand*)—Cold—cold!—that was an ice-bolt!—I shiver—It grows—very dark—Alonzo!—Victoria!—very—very dark—
[Dies.]

THE END.

EPILOGUE,

SPOKEN BY MRS. MARDYN.

CLOS'D is the scene ; and, hush'd by Death's relief,
Lie *Manuel's* madness and *Ximena's* grief :
Let me then o'er their graves roam broken-hearted,
And read the epitaphs on all departed.

No formal burial needs, for, be it known,
Parnassus has a church-yard of its own ;
There, honor'd all, with fitting tombs recline
The fabled heroes of the glowing Nine.
There stands the sepulchre, where Rapture views
Entomb'd the offspring of our SHAKESPEARE'S Muse ;
And on its base has many a Bard and Sage
His comments grav'd through every after-age,—
By honoring them has made himself be known,
And by their names immortaliz'd his own.
There *Norval* rests, there *Zanga's* guilty pride,—
There *Jaffier* sleeps by *Belvidera's* side ;
Thence at your potent call they rise, and here
Revive, and live again their short career ;
Then sink, as your applause or frowns may doom,
To short repose, or an eternal tomb.
Then let me try to deck with fitting glory
Those heroes who, to-night, have fall'n before you.

Here lies *Alonzo*, slain by murderers grim ;
And, faith ! but little else is known of him.
He, says Report, was Spain's defence and pride ;
His life is hearsay,—but we know he died.
How many men (I thus his moral give)
Live but to die !—The warrior dies to live !

EPILOGUE.

Here *Manuel* lies; how many a tottering sire,
Of half his years, lacks half his youthful fire?
Was not, speak ye who viewed him through the scene,
His impulse genuine, and his spirit *Keen*?
The moral string our Poet meant to touch
Is that of doting on you: *sons* too much.
At his child's death, the widower quitted life;
He'd liv'd for years after he lost his wife!

Here lies *De Zelos*,—a great villain,—granted;
He kill'd the younker whose estate he wanted.
A bungling knave! could he not find, by skill,
Flaw in the deed, or doubt upon the will?
Or, should we on his tomb this axiom carve,
“Better to kill at once than leave to starve?”

Here lies young *Torrismond*, of noble race,
Who fell the victim of his sire's disgrace.
He found, and 'twas enough the youth to stagger,
His father's name upon the murd'rer's dagger.
Take heed, ye sires! ('tis this our Poet aims,)
Have special caution where ye write your names;
And never sign it, thus your children pray,
To any instrument—you give away.

Here doth the mourner, sad *Ximena*, lie
In death;—but hold!—one question—Did *she* die?
What tho' *she* fell, and rail'd on life's restraint,
Women talk thus who only mean to faint.
Well, then, for *her* we'll e'en delay our sorrow,
Till critics ascertain *her* fate to-morrow;
And, if you please, to fix the matter quite,
I'll meet you here again to-morrow night.



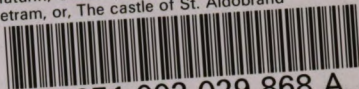
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Maturin, Charles Robert, 1780-1824.

Betram, or, The castle of St. Aldobrand



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